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OR,

BRIGHT BOHEMIA.

AN AMERICAN COMEDY IN FOUR ACTS.

BY
MILTON NOBLES.

PHILADELPHIA:
LEDGER JOB PRINT.

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PERSONS REPRESENTED.

QUILFORD DRIVERTON—Familiarly known as Quill Driver, an interviewer, a born Bohemian, with a vivid imagination, but heart in the right place.

POTTER ALFORD—A banker, who, in a mad moment, consents to enter the arena of politics.

SYLVESTER ALFORD—His adopted son; willing to work for the girl he loves.

JOB DRIVERTON—Quill's father; Bo'sun of the Southern Cross.

MAX STEIN—Our cousin German; a domestic printer's devil, and leader of "Dot Leetle German Band."

PERCY DURHAM—"He meant well, but didn't know."

MAJOR BUFFEM—The Democratic Demosthenes.

DR. STUFFEM—The Republican Cicero.

COL. SMITHERS—"Originated the entire movement, sir."

GEN. DELANCY SMYTHE—Who was going to horsewhip the editor.

MAYOR BELLAMY BROWN, OF N. J.—Who was going to cane the editor.

CAPT. THEODORE BLINKS—Who was going to shoot the editor.

MR. R. EMMETT GRATTAN—A tumper, from Tumpville, who was going to "tump" the editor.

ALGERNON ARTHUR—Fresh (very) from Harvard, who showed the editor how to run a newspaper.

SANDY, "The Kid"—An artist in the diamond line.

BILLY, "The Killer"—An art patron.

FLORENCE WOLVERTON—Alford's niece, an heiress, who finds her fortune a handicap in Cupid's race; just twenty; awfully sweet, and awfully jolly.

JESSIE CRAYTON—Alford's ward, with a sincere affection for Syl., but a sense of justice and gratitude that was equal to her love.

MARY ANN MALONY—An enigma; a woman who didn't want to be interviewed.

MISS CORNELIA SAWIN (from Boston)—A book agent, who interviewed the Interviewer.

FIRST INTERVIEW.

The candidate from Hexter's. The campaign inaugurated. The Interviewer as a political manager, manufacturer of character and culinary critic.

SECOND INTERVIEW.

First Episode.—The Grand Rally. The Interviewer as a friend in need, an annihilator of false theories and stump speaker. Second Episode.—The Band Master and the art patrons. Third Episode.—The Bohemian as a love maker and patent burglar alarm. The night-cap.

THIRD INTERVIEW.

The political dinner. The Interviewer as an after-dinner speaker. A little politics and considerable love making. The Interviewer almost a hero.

FOURTH INTERVIEW.

First Episode.—The Interviewer as the Fighting Editor. Second Episode.—A little feminine philosophy. Third Episode.—The final Interview, which surprises the Interviewer, and many others.

INTERVIEWS; OR BRIGHT BOHEMIA.

ACT I.

Parlor in MR. ALFORD'S house, New York, handsomely furnished. Doors, R. and L. Window, C. MAX STEIN discovered reading newspaper.

Max. Dere vas nothings here. No news at all. Zwei suicides and drei murders. Don't they got somethings better than that in the papers now [*turns over paper.*] Hoch! dot vas better—"Heavy failure! suspected fraud." Hein.

Enter MARY ANN.

Mary. Now then, sleepy head. You're the fattest-witted Dutchman I ever did see. Dozing over the morning paper as usual, and Mr. Alford's bell has been going like mad any time for the last ten minutes.

Max. Oh, dis vas spice.

Mary. Yes, you'll be spiced like a round of beef if Mr. Alford don't get his morning paper and his hot water pretty soon.

Max. Vell, ven he sees dot paper he'll vish it at blitzen before he ever saw it; and he's up to his neck in hot water already.

Mary. Why, what's the matter?

Max. Vot isn't it? Mary Ann, ish dot salary of yours all paid?

Mary. In course it is—that is, I hain't had this month's yet.

Max. Mary Ann, don't you got some sense? Dot salary of mine is drawn over. Oh, I vas smart, I tells you. I know sometings or two, I don't think.

Mary. Can't you tell me what's the matter?

Max. Mary Ann, don't you got some politeness? Dot vas rudeness to interrupt a gentleman ven he vas reading.

Mary. If you don't read it out I'll take the paper from you [*attempts to do so—Business—bell rings.*] There's Mr. Alford's bell again.

Max. Vell, you don't think I vas going to run some for a [*consulting paper*] 'fraudulent bankrupt?'

Mary. Fraudulent bankrupt! Lor', what's that?

Max. Don't you got some schools in this country, Mary Ann? A fraudulent bankrupt is a man that don't got sense enough to get away mit money when he steals it. Listen [*reads*]: "A profound sensation vas created in commercial circles—"

Mary. What's them?

Max. Oh, a circle vas a little round thing like ein penny, and a commercial vas—somedings down town.

Mary. Lor', Max, but aint eddercation a fine thing? And what about them little things down town?

Max. Don't you got some patience, Mary Ann? "A profound sensation vas created in commercial circles yesterday afternoon by the rumor that the well-known banking house of Alford and Company had suspended payment—"

Mary. And what's that?

Max. Suspended payment? Dot means that they hung up their creditors.

Mary. And won't they pay any more?

Max. Nein!

Mary. And they—I mean old Alford—owes me over six dollars on this month. I'll go and get it.

Max. Dot money vas all gone, Mary Ann. Ven a man becomes a fraudulent bankrupt and hangs up his creditors, dot vas all there is about it. I won't read you the whole article, for women like you, being foreigners, vill find many things in the English language they can't understand [*bell rings*], and dot Alford don't owe me something, so he may have his paper, specially ven dere is sometings in it he don't like. [*Exit.*]

Mary. Oh, murder! The house 'll be sold out by the sheriff, and I'll lose my place—likewise my six dollars!

Enter JESSIE.

Ah, Miss Jessie! we're both of us to be turned out like dissolute orphans upon the wicked world.

Jessie. Why, what's the matter, Mary Ann?

Mary. The master's gone bust, Miss Jessie, and beat all his creditors, and we're ruined, and that's what's the matter.

Jessie. Mr. Alford bankrupt? I don't believe it!

Mary. I read it in the papers, Miss, in black and white—least-ways, Max read it to me in broken Dutch, and that's what it said.

Jessie. It's impossible! Mr. Alford came from business yesterday in his usual spirits. Surely if such a calamity as this had been impending—

Enter ALFORD, violently excited, in dressing-gown and slippers, carries paper in his hand. MAX follows with pitcher of hot water.

Alford. It's infamous! it's a libel! it's worse—it's a conspiracy!

It's calculated to injure me in good name and business reputation! I'll make these fellows smart for it, if there's law in America!

Jessie. What's the matter, Mr. Alford?

Alford. Matter! They say I'm a bankrupt—a fraudulent bankrupt! It's some d——d electioneering dodge! Do I look like a fraudulent bankrupt?

Jessie. [*Soothingly.*] Not the least, sir.

Alford. If I make them melt their last pound of type into nickels to pay their lawyer's fees, I'll have justice for this!

Jessie. Of course you will, sir! Pray, don't excite yourself.

Alford. This last sentence gives the animus of the whole thing away [*reads*]: "In view of the unsavory notoriety which will henceforth attach to all connected with this bank, Mr. Alford will, doubtless, see the propriety of withdrawing from a contest he should never have entered." Now, listen to me, Jessie, and you, Max, and you, Mary Ann, up till this moment I didn't care a red cent whether I ever went to congress or not; but now I shall go there, or spend my last dollar trying.

Mary. I beg your pardon, sir, but before you spend your last dollar, do you happen to have six dollars about you?

Alford. Don't bother me about your six dollars, girl! What do you want it for?

Mary. Please, sir, as you've gone into fraudulent bankruptcy, I thought as how, may be, being a poor girl—

Alford. Now you shall get out of my house inside of an hour [*searches pockets.*] Who's got six dollars? Max, give that girl six dollars, and let her clear.

Max. Here vas your hot vasser, sir.

Alford. To the deuce with you and your hot water [*pushes Max back—water splashes him—bus.*] Jessie, pay that woman.

Jessie. [*Paying her.*] Don't be angry with her, Mr. Alford. It was only her ignorance.

Alford. I'm not angry with her. But that just shows the mischief a malicious article like that may do. A man isn't safe from its effect even in the bosom of his own family.

Enter FLOY WOLVERTON.

Floy. Why, uncle, not dressed yet, and breakfast is on the table!

Alford. Oh, bother breakfast! I've no appetite for breakfast. I'm a fraudulent bankrupt, miss, and I'm waiting for the train for Sing Sing!

Floy. Poor old uncle's got a fit.

Alford. A fit! a pretty tight fit. He's stark, staring mad! He'll do you a mischief if you don't get out of here. Go on—eat your breakfasts with what appetites you may. I'll feed on thoughts of vengeance.

Floy. A most apopleptic diet!

Jessie. Let me remain with you, Mr. Alford.

Alford. I don't want anybody. Stop; where's Sylvester?

Floy. He has not come down yet.

Alford. Of course, not—it's too early for him. That young bird will never worry the worm by early rising. Tell him I want to see him when he appears; and now leave me alone.

Mary [*To MAX.*] I don't believe he's so bankrupt as the papers say.

Max. Well, you can't sometimes most always tell. He had to borrow the six dollars for you from Miss Crayton.

Mary. Well, he got it, anyhow; so, you see, his credit's good.

Max. Dot's so, just at first; but it won't last. Anyhow, you've got your money and I've got mine, so we'll wait and watch—there was always nice pickings to be had at a sheriff's sale.

[*Exit MARY ANN and MAX.*]

Floy. Well, I'm going to breakfast—you'd better come, uncle—I left your coffee poured out, and it won't be fit to drink.

Alford. Of course it won't, if you made it.

Floy. Good-bye; you're as cross as a bear. Come, Jessie.

[*Exit FLOY.*]

Jessie. I don't like to leave you like this, Mr. Alford—you are worried and annoyed about this thing—

Alford [*More gently.*] But that is no reason why it should worry and annoy you, dear.

Jessie. As if all your troubles did not affect me. You have been a father to me, Mr. Alford, all my life—

Alford. And I reap my reward a hundred times a day in a love and attention no daughter could surpass. I never made a better bargain in my life, Jessie, than I made the day I took little Jessie Crayton into my house to be its sunshine and joy.

Jessie. I won't be flattered, but I will have you come to breakfast.

Alford. Well, you may keep something warm for me—I'll come presently. Now, run along, Jessie, for I want to be alone. [*Exit JESSIE.*] Dear, affectionate child, that is. [*Looking over paper.*] Yes, it is evidently only an electioneering dodge, and the rumor will be contradicted in to-morrow's papers. It won't hurt the credit of Alford & Co., for it can't. There are not many men in New York who could write their check for bigger figures than I could this minute, but it may create a prejudice among certain ignorant people, which would injure me politically. Now, how to fight that! Let me see! [*Enter MAX.*] Well, what is it?

Max. Only dot there was somebody down-stairs to see you.

Alford. Somebody? What do you mean by somebody? Hasn't he, she, or it got a name?

Max. Yes, and a card. [*Hands it.*]

Alford. "Quillford Driverton, 'New York Thunderbolt.'" Why, that's the very paper—well, of all the confounded pieces of impertinence!

Max. What shall I say him, sir?

Alford. Oh, fetch me my pistol, and ask him to walk up.

Max [*Going.*] Yah!

Alford, Stop, you fool. I'd like to shoot him. I believe the act would do me good; and I am sure it would render the country a service—but we can't have everything we like in this world.

Max. Dot vas so.

Alford. Who asked you for your opinion? Tell the bandit I won't see him.

Max. Yah!

Alford. Put it civil, but be sure he understands it. In short, see that he clears out.

Max. Yah?

[*Exit.*]

Alford. [*Going and locking both doors.*] Well, if he manages to see me now, he's a sharp interviewer. The idea of that paper, after printing a scurrilous libel about me, sending its representative to visit me—probably to see how I have been affected by their article, and to find out if it is likely to have the desired effect of forcing me to withdraw from the canvass. Well, it won't. I can tell them that. It has simply had the effect of making me more in earnest than ever, and it has laid the foundation for as pretty a little libel suit as they were ever the defendants in. As for [*glancing at card*] Mr. Quilford Driverton, he has had his journey for his pains. As if I were the sort of man to be pestered by newspaper reporters.

Enter QUILFORD DRIVERTON *through window. He comes down brushing off the knees of his pants and producing note-book.*

Quill. A tough climb, but I have my victim cornered [*looks over Alford's shoulder.*] Ah, good morning, Mr. Alford; I see you were expecting me—I need not introduce myself, as you have my card in your hand.

Alford. Are you that individual, sir?

Quill. I am that individual, sir. [*Writing rapidly in note-book.*]
“Was received with marked cordiality by Mr. Alford”

Alford. How did you get here, sir?

Quill. [*Writing.*] “Ushered up-stairs by a servant in livery.” I climbed, sir. I have been climbing all my life. Already more than half the rungs of the dizzy ladder of fame have been pressed by my aspiring feet—I am one of the men who soar, sir—who soar. But to business.

Alford. I have no business with you, sir, and I consider your intrusion most unwarrantable.

Quill. [*Writing.*] “Having expressed his satisfaction at being furnished an opportunity of making a statement to the million readers of the ‘Thunderbolt,’ Mr. Alford proceeded to explain.” Now, sir, you are in order. I will hear whatever you may have to say.

Alford. I have nothing whatever to say, sir, except “get out.”

Quill. By the way, have you breakfasted? I haven't, and one can always discuss these little matters so much more freely and pleasantly in the unrestrained intercourse which the social board

promotes. And for a real, good, informal, pleasant chat, give me your breakfast-table—there is more friendliness in a tête-à-tête morning meal, than in a dozen formal stereotyped dinners.

Alford. I hope you may break your neck before you break your fast.

Quill. It is quite unlikely. However, time enough for breakfast; and as you say, "business first and pleasure after." About your failure, now?

Alford. My failure? It is an atrocious calumny, sir. It is—

Quill. [*Soothingly.*] I know, I know; they all say that. Now what is the exact amount of your liabilities?

Alford. I haven't any, sir.

Quill. You have no liabilities, debts, or anything of that kind?

Alford. No, sir.

Quill. No assets at all?

Alford. None whatever, sir—I mean—yes, abundant assets, no liabilities. It's none of your business, anyhow

Quill. [*Writing*] "Mr. Alford admits that a cursory examination of the books shows a deplorable state of affairs."

Alford. I admit nothing, sir. The house of Alford & Co. is as solvent as any in New York. What do you know about banking, anyhow?

Quill. What do I know about banking? My dear sir, if there is one subject in this world with which I am more conversant than another, it is banking. Why, sir, it was under my advice that Mr. Fawcett established the postal savings bank system in England, a short time since. I wonder that you, an established banker, were not aware of that fact.

Alford. [*Consulting card*] I confess, I thought—

Quill. I know, I know. They had in contemplation an equestrian statue to me at St. Martin's le grand—the tribute of a grateful nation to its chief financial benefactor, but for such empty honors, sir, I have little regard.

Alford. You don't look as if you had ever seen the inside of a bank in your life.

Quill. Appearances are too often deceptive. My brain fairly teems with gigantic schemes. I am thinking out a plan for a new daily newspaper, at present; I flatter myself it would revolutionize the typographical world, and lay out the New York Herald cold.

Alford. Indeed? that seems a big scheme.

Quill. Big? my dear sir, it is gigantic. Imagine a sextuple sheet, solid reading matter, no advertisements.

Alford. Oh, no advertisements.

Quill. That is one of the distinctest features of the system. Without advertising you can be independent. No truckling to patrons: no pages filled with uninteresting matter.

Alford. But how will it pay?

Quill. It's enormous circulation. A journal devoted to science, art, literature, politics, the drama, the sporting interest, and thoroughly

up to the mark in the news of the day, will find readers in every class, especially as it will be retailed for a cent a copy.

Alford. Such a paper, as you describe would cost at least three cents to issue; so I confess I can't see where your profit would come in at the price you name.

Quill. My dear sir, my profit would be found in its enormous circulation.

Alford. I fail to see how. What are you going to call it?

Quill. I thought of calling it "The Utopia."

Alford. You will scarcely find a better name.

Quill. I am glad you like it. But to return to your embarrassments; you see I put it mildly—

Alford. I have no embarrassments, sir.

Quill. Well, well [*writing*]: "Mr. Alford exhibited a natural reluctance to discuss his pecuniary difficulties." I'll fill in the rest all right. You'll find a nicely tabulated statement of your financial situation in the "Thunderbolt" to-morrow.

Alford. Really, sir—

Quill. Now, to come to the next question. Do you intend to withdraw from your candidacy?

Alford. No sir, never. I shall fight the thing out to the bitter end; and you may say in your "Thunderbolt" that I am resolved to be elected, if it should take every dollar—

Quill. Your creditors have left you. I admire your grit, old man, although its method of expression smacks of bribery and corruption.

Alford. No bribery, sir; but I know enough about politics to be aware that no election ever yet was carried without a certain amount of legitimate expenditure.

Quill. Perhaps you would have no objection to state to me clearly—not necessarily for publication, but as a guarantee of good faith—the principles on which you make your stand.

Alford. Not the slightest. I am in favor of—but I will give you a copy of the platform on which I stand, and you can publish it in the "Thunderbolt" if you like, and if you dare. Excuse me a moment. [*Goes to door—business with locked door. Exit.*]

Quill. So the old gentleman had fortified himself against me. He little knows, if love laughs at locksmiths, interviewers fairly hoot them to derision. Upon my word, I rather like the old candidate from Hexter's. He's peppery, but honest. I really don't believe he defrauded his creditors at all, and I'm beginning to have grave doubts whether he have any creditors to defraud.

Enter FLOY, carrying tray of breakfast things.

Hullo! I must conceal myself if I don't want to scare the neat-handed Phyllis. [*Gets behind window curtains.*]

Floy. Why, where's uncle? If the gentleman won't come to breakfast, breakfast must go the gentleman. [*Disposes tray on table.*]

I suppose he'll be back directly, and he'll eat something if he finds it here.

Quill. What a charming little Hebe! Hungry as I am, she fairly divides my attention with the appetizing meal she is spreading.

Floy. There! I think that's just how he likes things to be.

Quill. Who wouldn't be a candidate, to be waited on by a sylph like that?

Floy. And now I may go and finish my own breakfast with an easy conscience. [*Turns to go and catches sight of Quill.*] Oh! [*Screams.*]

Quill [*Advancing.*] Pray don't agitate yourself. [*Aside.*] Upon my word, Mr. Alford has unimpeachable taste in servant girls.

Floy. Who are you, sir, and where did you come from, and what are you doing here, and how did you come here? Did you come in through the window?

Quill. To answer your last question first—I did, but not recently. I have been having a business conversation with Mr. Alford. In short, I have been trying to obtain the particulars about the bankruptcy.

Floy. There is no bankruptcy, sir. Mr. Alford is as solvent as you or—

Quill. An unfortunate simile in my case, at least. But living in the house, you surely ought to know the truth. Tell me now, in confidence, have your wages been paid you regularly?

Floy. [*Aside.*] Oh, this is good; he takes me for a servant. [*Aloud.*] Yes, sir; with the most exemplary regularity.

Quill. [*Aside.*] Upon my word, she is very pretty, and her diction is admirable for her station in life. [*Aloud.*] Now, tell me my dear—by the bye, what is your name?

Floy. [*Suppressing laugh and dropping courtesy.*] Mary Ann, sir.

Quill. Well, Mary Ann, here's fifty cents to buy you bonnet-strings. [*Aside.*] There goes my breakfast.

Floy. [*Aside, taking money with reluctance.*] I didn't bargain for this; but I suppose it wouldn't do to refuse.

Quill. Have you a sweetheart, my dear?

Floy. [*Aside.*] I suppose he'll want to kiss me next; it's what strangers always do to servant maids on the stage; but I must draw the line somewhere.

Quill. Well, have you a sweetheart, Ann?

Floy. La, sir, what do you know about sweethearts?

Quill. If there is one subject in this world on which I am better informed than another, it is sweethearts. Sweethearts. That's just where I live.

Floy. Where?

Quill. I spoke in metaphors, my dear. So you have not got a sweetheart, Ann?

Floy. That's the second time you have called me out of my name. My name is not Ann, sir.

Quill. Well, don't answer so short. But I can't help calling you

so. You remind me so much of one I loved and lost. Her name was Ann; that is to say, she was christened Ann, but we called her Annie for short.

Floy. It isn't short.

Quill. Well, for tone. I don't know what the seraphic for Annie is, or I'd tell you what they call her way up on the evergreen shore. The manner of her death was somewhat singular. She was an accomplished performer on the accordion. Her parents lived in the rural districts, and every evening, after supper, she was in the habit of repairing to the porch and playing the accordion till midnight. She was very delicate, poor girl, and often, after one of these musical saturnalia, I have been obliged to carry her indoors—her strength prostrated completely by the melody.

Floy. Seems to me, I'd have locked the accordion up.

Quill. If you had, you'd have lost a very singular story. One evening, just as she had tuned the instrument up to concert pitch, and was beginning a symphony, we heard from the porch of the house opposite, the strains of another accordion, and through the gathering gloom we caught sight of a young man playing this musical wind-box. All the artist's pride within the bosom of my lovely girl was aroused, and she threw all her soul and muscle into the bellows. Still the strains of the opposition songster rose higher and higher, and still my darling, calling on reserves of force no one would have dreamed of her possessing, answered his challenge. All night long the musical duel was continued; all next day, the fight went on. For three days and three nights the notes of the accordions mingled between the houses. By this time my pet was too weak to set up, but reclining on a lounge she still played on. That afternoon the scholars of an academy in which Annie was a teacher, called upon her in a body, while her rival opposite, much worn, but still defiant, was surrounded by members of his Lodge, in full regalia. It was like a duel between two nightingales. At last my suffering Annie, gathering all her strength for one burst of melody—the air she chose was "Hold the Fort"—sent the stirring strain vibrating up to the very skies. But it was a last effort; the noble heart was broken, and like the dying swan, she expired amid the notes she was creating. That is why I never married.

Floy. How very sad!

Quill. For the neighbors, very.

Floy. Goodness me, how long your story has kept me. Mr. Alford might come back any moment and find me talking to you.

Quill. Aren't you going to give me a kiss before you go?

Floy. [*Aside.*] I thought so. [*Aloud.*] Not this morning.

Quill. Oh, good day.

[*Goes up and interviews plaster cast on table.*]

Floy. [*Going.*] Well, either that fellow is crazy himself, or he takes me for a fool. He's not bad looking, though. He has a splendid head. If he only were decently dressed, and would condescend

to shave and comb his hair, I daresay he would be almost handsome. [Exit L 2 E.]

Quill. There she goes. Perhaps I was a little abrupt, but what does the girl expect? Is a man to lay regular siege to a little chit's affections in the intervals of an interview. Why, that's beyond even me. Still, she's very pretty, both in face and manners, and modest and sweetly spoken—and she's carried off the price of my breakfast. Never mind, she's left a better one behind her. [Sits at table.] And everything will taste the better since she carried it up. Decidedly sweet little girl, and my style to a dot. [Eats.] I wonder if—oh, pshaw! There I am at my old trick of castle-building, and I haven't exchanged a dozen words with the girl. Besides, she's a servant. I don't know why that should be an objection, though. We are all servants—at least the vast majority of us, for Czars and autocrats are in a minority. Capital steak, this, Mary Ann. Can't say I like Mary Ann. But after all, what's in a name? Another cup of coffee, Quill? Don't care if I do.

[Bus. of eating all along. Enter ALFORD. He is reading from leaflet, and does not look up at first.]

Alford. Here are the opinions I stand by and upon. Excuse me if I have kept you waiting, but I could not lay my hand on what I wanted just at the moment. [Reads.] "As a citizen of the great—

Quill. Sit down and take a bit of breakfast, won't you? That thing will keep till afterwards.

Alford [Astonished.] Upon my word?—May I ask, sir, how you come—you, of all people in the world—to be breakfasting at my house?

Quill. It's a long story. Sit down, and I'll tell you all about it afterwards. You'd better commence at once if you want to catch up with me, for I promise you I've laid in a pretty good ground tier already.

Alford [Sitting.] I suppose I may as well, though I confess I am bewildered.

Quill. Don't encourage bewilderment, nor any strong passion. It impairs the appetite and injures the digestion. Try a little of the omelet to begin with—you'll find it more than fair. Your cook, sir, though not an artist, has a very decent smattering of the divine art. A thought-more parsley in this omelet would have improved it, though; just tell your cook that from me the next time you are in the kitchen.

Alford. You appear to be a keen critic of cookery, sir.

Quill. If there is one thing in this world that I do know a little more about than another, it is cookery. Why sir, you might scarcely believe it, but my knowledge of the divine art saved my life once.

Alford. Indeed!

Quill. Yes, on the voyage from Sydney to Callao—we were shipwrecked. South seas, you know, coral islands and so forth. The inhabitants proved to be most advanced cannibals. They started in on the drowned bodies that were washed ashore, keeping me and

the other few survivors in a sort of a pen, to fatten like chickens till they were ready for us. They fed us pork, principally, and gave us as much as we wanted to eat. We had few pleasures, as you may imagine in our wretched captivity with the prospect of a terrible death staring us in the face. One of my greatest, was the pleasure of the table, and every day I exercised my culinary skill on our pig in such a way, I flatter myself, as to make my poor companions forget, at least, momentarily, their frightful situation. A piece of steak?

Alford. Thank you, but go on with your story. It is most interesting.

Quill. Oh, it is nearly ended! One day as we were sitting down to a dish of cotelettes, sauce piquante, the head chief happened along. At my invitation, he partook of the dish, and then and there forswore human flesh, restricting himself and his subjects to that of the hog from that time forward.

Alford. Wonderful!

Quill. There was a conversion effected by cookery in a single moment, such as no amount of missionary labor had accomplished. They had barbecued their last missionary, and all because he did not know how to cook cotelettes, sauce piquante.

Alford. It is almost incredible.

Quill. Truth is stranger than fiction. I escaped, after having been obliged to cook pig in all forms for about eighteen months, but I had the satisfaction of having saved the lives of my companions as well as my own, and I have a medal at my home from the Missionary Society in testimony of the completeness of the conversion.

Alford. Well, Mr. Driverton, your story is both curious and interesting, and in expressing the satisfaction it has given me to have enjoyed the pleasure of your company at breakfast, will you permit me to ask, how the deuce it got here?

Quill. Certainly; your servant girl brought it up to me. Very graceful attention on her part.

Alford. What, Mary Ann?

Quill. Yes, Mary Ann; not a favorite name of mine, but a sweetly pretty girl.

Alford. Ah, you know her, then!

Quill. Very well, indeed. A charming girl, and very much superior to her station.

Alford. I'll be shot if I think so! Well, we must not dispute about taste. Now, Mr. Driverton, have you quite finished breakfast?

Quill. I have breakfasted sumptuously—thanks.

Alford. Well, now, I will read you this platform: "As a citizen of this great and—"

Quill. Excuse my interrupting you, Mr. Alford; but there's no use reading that. I know just how it runs; I've written scores of them.

Alford. You have? Is it possible! Are you up in politics, then?

Quill. Well, I should ejaculate! If there is one thing in this

world that I do know a little more about than another, it is politics.

Alford. Astonishing! Do you know your visit to me may turn out the happiest moment of my life. Another cup of coffee.

Quill. Thank you, sir.

Alford. I've been thinking of endeavoring to secure the services of just such a man as yourself to help me to conduct this canvass. A ready, fluent writer—

Quill. That's me.

Alford. Thoroughly up in his subject.

Quill. That's me again.

Alford. Who could take charge of the newspaper part of the campaign, and on occasion throw together a few notes to guide me where a speech would be required.

Quill. If there is one thing I have made a study of more than another, it is oratory.

Alford. Well, sir, do you like the idea? I'll make it worth your while. You see—I don't mind confessing to you—I have no political experience—never ran for office in my life.

Quill. Say no more, sir. Intrust your canvass to Quilford Driver-ton, and you shall be carried triumphantly over every obstacle.

Alford. Shake hands on that. I should explain that it is not of my own will or inclination that I am thus before the public. Many of my friends have insisted that I can serve my fellow-citizens in this high office, and have told me so, with such reiteration that I have yielded to their entreaties. I really could not decline.

Quill. Decline nothing, my dear sir. I have made it a rule of my life to decline nothing, and I find it a good working rule, too. Now, I will at once proceed to inaugurate a boom which will send you into the National House of Representatives in fast express time.

Alford. I feel the more need of such an auxiliary as you will prove, when I read the scandalous, scurrilous attacks that have been made upon me in the columns of some papers. Listen to this, for instance. [*Takes up paper and reads.*] "Mr. Potter Alford, who represents the Conservative party, is a haughty, purse-proud aristocrat, with nothing but his wealth to recommend him. He is reputed to be worth some millions, and assuredly for purposes of National Government, it is all he is worth."

Quill. Infamous! Scandalous!

Alford [*Reading.*] "This man, in whose composition there is not a spark of kindly or even manly feeling, has the presumption to ask the honest votes of Hexter's to place him as their representative in Congress."

Quill. That is dastardly.

Alford [*Hotly.*] I'd give fifty dollars to know who wrote that article.

Quill. That's a good deal more than I got for writing it. I wrote it, Mr. Alford.

Alford. You?

Quill. Oh, that's nothing. You just wait till you read what I'll write about the other fellow.

Alford. But Mr. Driverton—

Quill. This is all business to us.

Alford. But, sir, have you no opinions, no preferences.

Quill. They are luxuries, and quite beyond the means of the average journalist. Besides, a journalist writing up one side of a case, is like a lawyer—he must follow his brief. As Quilford Driverton the man, I have deep-seated convictions which the smoke and flames of martyrdom could not subdue. As Quilford Driverton the journalist, I am at any man's service, always provided it is legal and honorable.

Alford. A strange school of ethics.

Quill. But the true one. As well blame the actor for playing an immoral part, as the journalist for his free lance proclivities.

Alford. Well, you know best. I may occasionally want you to—Have you ever written any political speeches, Mr. Driverton?

Quill. And delivered them, too. Before the war, I stumped the State of Illinois with Stephen A. Douglass. Spoke every night for three weeks. The second week one of my bronchial tubes was closed from hoarseness—went a whole week on one bronchial tube. Was carried into Springfield on the shoulders of the excited populace. When I finished, nineteen babies who had been born during the canvass had been named after me, with the northern counties still to hear from.

Alford. Well, if you will jot down any thoughts that may occur to you, it will be of great service to me in my addresses.

Quill. What we want, is a lively campaign. If you want to be successful with the American people, you must give them plenty of ginger.

Alford. Ginger!

Quill. Ginger! It is astonishing how partial the American eagle is to hot spice. [*Takes note-book.*] Let me see, now. Who is your opponent?

Alford. Mr. Henry Smithson.

Quill. I'll give him some hot shot on trial. Nasty pride—real name, Smith—put the son to it. What's his business?

Alford. He keeps the principal store at Hexter's.

Quill. Just so [*Writing.*] Refused credit to a starving widow with seven small children. Made preparations to go into bankruptcy and defraud his creditors. Entered into a combination, last winter, to advance the price of coal.

Alford. But, my dear sir—

Quill. What was his mother's name?

Alford. I do not know.

Quill. Never mind [*Writing.*] Grave doubts as to the marriage of his father and mother. His brother was lynched by the Vigilance Committee in San Francisco, in '52. His grandfather—

Alford. Do you suppose I shall allow such scandalous falsehoods to be published?

Quill. They all do it. You can't conduct a vigorous campaign without it. They'll say the same things about you. Of course you—you commenced life as a canal boatman.

Alford. No, sir. When I left college, I went into the banking business, and have continued in it ever since.

Quill. Could not be better. Poor boy in a bank, wins his way to the confidence of the firm. Taken into partnership; loaned the Government large sums of money. Originator of a fund to make advances to workingmen, without interest or security. Has in contemplation the erection of a home for the support of the aged and indigent—

Alford. What's all that nonsense?

Quill. Your biography. I'll get you up a character that will cause all who hear of you to love and reverence you.

Alford. I can't say I entirely approve of your methods of conducting this campaign.

Quill. My dear sir, they are the only methods that will win. They have been tried and found efficacious.

Alford. But—

Quill. You have been lied about one way, and you didn't like it. Trust my experience of human nature, and you will find this method much pleasanter in every way.

Enter SYLVESTER.

Sylvester. They told me you wanted to see me, sir.

Alford. Yes, Syl. You recollect I said I would take your answer upon the matter we were discoursing yesterday, this morning.

Syl. Alas! sir; it is not a subject on which we change our opinion in a night. What I said yesterday, I say to-day—I will say to-morrow—I would say in fifty years, if I live so long.

Alford. Take care, Sylvester. I have been an indulgent guardian to you.

Syl. You have been more than a father, sir.

Alford. And in a matter like this, my advice—nay, my positive commands—are entitled to some weight.

Syl. Father—for I must still call you so—you will recollect that this is, to me at least, a very delicate subject, and we are not alone.

Quill. Don't mind me. Indeed, if there is one thing in this world I have made a particular study of, it is a delicate subject.

Alford. This gentleman is a friend of mine, Sylvester, and I am inclined to place the utmost reliance on his judgment and experience. With your permission, Syl, I will take him into our confidence. I am about to confide to him far higher interests than your boyish flirtations.

Syl. Take whom you will into your confidence, sir, and call my love by whatever name you please, it can make no difference to my heart.

Alford. Mr. Driverton, this boy is my adopted son—adopted to

take the place of one I have lost. He will be my heir. I have all along designed him to marry my niece, Miss Florence Wolverton, a charming young lady, whose position and fortune make her in every way a suitable match for my heir.

Quill. But your young friend's affections are engaged elsewhere. I am afraid my advice will be valueless here, Mr. Alford.

Alford. And why so?

Quill. Because no one will accept it.

Alford. You have divined correctly, at any rate. Sylvester fancies himself in love with Miss Jessie Crayton—a mere dependent here; a sweet and charming girl, certainly, and one for whose future I intend to provide suitably; but no match for the heir of the house of Alford & Co.

Quill. A very pretty coil as it stands. And now shall I tell you how the case looks to a dispassionate outsider, regarding it from an every-day, worldly point of view?

Syl. If you please.

Quill. You would be very foolish to run counter to your father's wishes.

Alford. There.

Quill. But you will run counter to them, and marry Miss Jessie, and be very happy, and the old gentleman will eventually forgive you.

Alford. Never.

Quill. Oh, yes; some time.

[*Enter JESSIE.*]

Alford. Jessie, my dear, come here. You and Sylvester fancy you love each other.

Jessie. We do love each other, sir.

Alford. A passing boy and girl fancy, that is all; and would you marry upon that, and disappoint all the hopes and plans I had formed for you both?

Jessie. Mr. Alford, you have been a father to both of us. I am sure neither of us would willingly do anything to grieve or disappoint you. I shall never marry without your consent.

Quill. Nobly said, by Jove.

[*JESSIE starts.*]

Alford. Jessie, I must introduce you to Mr. Driverton, who is going to assist me in my canvass, and will be, for some time, at least, an inmate of my house. Mr. Driverton, my ward, Miss Crayton.

[*QUILL bows, and takes an opportunity to whisper to SYL.*]

Quill. Keep a good heart, my boy; I'll help you all I can; and through life I have been very successful in helping every one—but myself.

[*Enter MAX with telegram.*]

Alford. What is it?

Max. Dot vas von dispatch for you.

[*ALFORD opens and reads it.*]

[*MAX to QUILL.*] Don't you got some sense. I tought I told you the boss wouldn't see mit you.

Quill. You did, my friend. But it seems you told a fib.

Max. Vell, don't I seen you going away?

Quill. An optical delusion, that's all.

Alford. I must go down to the bank immediately. Driverton, my boy, make yourself at home. You might run your eye over that address, and jot down any improvements that suggest themselves to you.

Quill. All right, sir.

Max. Dot vas a very strange peeseness.

Enter FLOY.

Quill. Ah, here's the pretty Mary Ann. Now I shall have leisure to pay her my attentions, and more weight, too, coming as an accredited representative of Mr. Alford.

[Winks, and makes by-play at FLOY.]

Alford. Ah, before I go, Mr. Driverton, allow me to introduce you to my niece, Miss Florence Wolverton.

Floy. Who takes this opportunity of returning your *douceur*, with thanks. *[Hands him money.]*

Quill. Your niece? The heiress? Oh, murder! I'm ruined!

(Curtain.)

ACT II.

SCENE I.—*Hexter's Dock on the Hudson—Park or forest wings. Stand, c. for political speakers, transparencies, etc. "Grand Rally this afternoon."* *BUFFEM, the Republican Cicero, STUFFEM, the Democratic Demosthenes. Stand draped with flags. Set house, country tavern with sign L. 2 E. Seats around door—at rise. Enter FLOY and JESSIE in riding habit.*

Floy. Now do you know this suits me better than New York. In the city, one is a unit—in the country one may be a magnate.

Jessie. You are always a magnate, dear Floy.

Floy. And you are a magnet, Jess, which is better still. You have a power of attraction which one young gentleman I wot of can't resist. Where's Syl, I wonder?

Jessie. How abrupt you are.

Floy. Natural transition, my dear—from the attractor to the attractee.

Jessie. Poor Syl?

Floy. And why poor?

Jessie. Oh, you know your uncle's feelings about us, Floy—we can never be anything to each other.

Floy. Never is a pretty long word, dear. I'll just formulate your position, and you'll see I know what I am talking about. Uncle wants to make a match between me and Syl—well he can't do it; for I'm against him. Uncle wants to keep you and Syl apart—well, he can't do it, for love is against him.

Jessie. You are very good to speak so hopefully, Floy, but I can't

feel as sanguine as you do. We are both so dependent, and I have no friend but you.

Floy. Oh, yes, you have. You have my uncle's new factotum, Mr. Quilford Driverton; and do you know, I can scarcely imagine a difficulty which I would not trust that young gentleman's ready wit and matchless impudence to extricate me from.

Jessie. He is very kind to interest himself in Syl as he has done; but what can he do?

Floy. I'm sure I don't know, but I should be more inclined to ask what can't he do. I wish they would fetch out their show—I came here to listen to the speeches.

Jessie. O Floy, you don't mean to be present at the meeting?

Floy. That's exactly what I do mean, and I mean to keep you to chaperone me.

Jessie [*Looking off.*] O Floy, here are the people coming—do let us get away.

Floy. Silly girl, it is only Syl and Mr. Driverton. [*Enter SYL and QUILL, L. U. E.*]

Jessie. I wouldn't have them find us waiting here for the world. Do come along. [*Drags Floy off R.*]

Quill [*Coming down.*] We're a trifle ahead of time, but that's a fault on the right side. I'll have time to put you up to some of the tricks of your new trade.

Syl. It is very kind of you to take so much trouble with me.

Quill. My dear boy, I understand your position with Mr. Alford and I sympathize thoroughly with your desire to be independent. Besides, I take as much interest in the efforts of an embryo reporter as a mother bird takes in the first flight of her fledglings. We have a few minutes before the crowd will get up from the station with the speakers, and I'll use them to give you an insight into the biz.

Syl. Well, it appears to me that a good collegiate education—

Quill. Isn't worth a rush to a reporter; that is, unless it is backed up by other qualifications, which, I trust, you possess or can acquire. I'll finish your education.

Syl. As you have finished your own, I suppose?

Quill. That's unkind, old fellow.

Syl. [*Offering his hand.*] Forgive me, Quill.

Quill. All right, old boy. You're like a young bear with all your troubles before you, and I won't be angry, if you find the fur rubbed a little bit the wrong way at first. That wouldn't have answered for me in the first days of my novitiate, but you're different. You have everything to begin with; I had nothing. Poverty and Fate combined to cheat me out of an education, though, happy accident, the Bohemians' kind foster-mother has, in some measure, supplied the deficiency.

Syl. And you're more than kind to offer me the benefit of your experience. I shall make a good reporter, if good tuition can make me one. Now what am I to do?

Quill. Use your faber and paper: make brief notes of what you

see and hear, and write them out at length afterwards; sling long words, and plenty of them, when you come to put in the padding, for you will be paid by the column. Don't confine yourself to facts, for facts are scarce, and we should starve in them. Fortunately, the imagination is boundless and knows no limits, save the credulity of the editor. Ridicule the Republican speeches, and give a strong Democratic tone to the whole article, and you will read your maiden effort in to-morrow's "Index."

Syl. The "Index?" Why that's the opposition sheet. I thought the "Scorcher" was our friend?

Quill. My dear boy, a professional reporter has no side, no opinions. This is a matter of business, not of principle. The "Index" boys are first-rate fellows, and all friends of mine.

Syl. Well, good-bye conviction. Now I am as unprincipled as if I had been ten years in journalism, and I'm ready for the speakers. Do they both speak from the same platform?

Quill. Yes, the regular old style stump argument. It's a good system, too, for it gives each one a chance to nail the others' lies before they get cold. [*Enter FLOY and JESSIE.*] Here come the ladies.

Floy. What a goose you are, Jessie—there's nothing catching about a political meeting.

Quill. And very little about the generality of the speeches.

Floy. Would you believe it, I have had the greatest difficulty in inducing this silly girl to come here at all.

Quill. Our good fortune that you have succeeded, Miss Wolverton.

Floy. Oh, Mr. Driverton, I'm glad you're here. There's a whole lot of questions I want to ask, and you know everything.

Quill. Not quite everything. Most things, though.

Floy. Well, will ladies go to the races? I want to go.

Quill. I am going, and that alone will crowd the grand-stand with the beauty and fashion of the vicinity; and if I may be allowed the honor of escorting you—

Floy. Oh, I shall ride. You ought just to have seen Jessie and me out this morning with the new ponies. They are simply perfect. We had such a brush on the River Road.

Quill. Did you? Let us hear about it.

Floy. We had the light wagon, and were jogging along at a Jersey gait, when who should come along but Mr. Durham with his prize team of blacks. My ponies pricked up their ears, and gave a jump that nearly pulled my arms out of their sockets, and made Jessie drop her parasol in the mud. "Never mind it, Jess," said I, "we're in for it now," and I gave the darlings their heads—you ought to have seen them throw out their pretty little feet, and just devour the road before them. I felt the blood tingling in my cheeks, and the air caught my breath as if I were in a swing. The ponies went faster and faster. Jessie got frightened, but I was as cool as Rockland Lake in winter. Durham wanted to pull up—didn't think it was good form to race with a lady, I suppose; but the blacks didn't

see it in that light, and pretty soon we were neck and neck, and both doing our level best. I kept my arms down and my elbows squared, and the ponies went like clockwork. Everything cleared the course for us, and you ought to have heard the cheers from the wagons we passed, as we went by them like a tempest. I couldn't hear anything but the rattling of the wheels, and the quick tap of the ponies' hoofs on the road. And the excitement! my heart was going as fast as my beauties, and I—I beat him, and led him a clear fifty yards at the turnpike gate. What do you think of that?

[*All applaud.*]

Quill. What a magnificent girl? She'd make a fortune for a hippodrome. What a pity you weren't born poor instead of rich, Miss Wolverton?

Floy. Why, so?

Quill. You would have electrified the world as an actress.

Floy. Do you think so?

Quill. I know so. If there's one thing in this world I do know a little more about than another, its actresses—I mean acting.

Floy. I have met very few professionals—only two or three, I think; but I liked them. They seemed very bright, genial and intelligent—and modest, too.

Jessie. Do you know many professionals, Mr. Driverton?

Quill. Very few better than Miss Wolverton. The way she played that little *soubrette* part for me, the first time I saw her—

Floy. Oh, do you remember that?

Quill. Shall I ever forget it? You played that part to perfection; fancy deceiving an old fakir like me. Why, I've been in the business myself.

Syl. Have you been an actor, too?

Quill. Oh, yes. Drink drove me to it. I once appeared as the hind legs of an elephant, at Niblo's. The character did not give me scope. Then I played the demon with the keg, to Jefferson's Rip Van Winkle; but I made chums with the property man, and he used to fill the keg, and the keg used to fill me; so I was invited to leave. Then came a play with an organ-grinder in it, and they wanted me to do the monkey; so I resigned in disgust.

Floy. And that ended your theatrical career?

Quill. As an actor, yes. Then I tackled management.

Jessie. Management?

Floy. Well, that was more dignified.

Quill. Depends on how you look at it. I saw an advertisement in the "Herald": "Wanted a manager with brains and capital to handle a lady star—no triflers need apply." Not being a trifter, I went to interview the lady, and ended by becoming her manager.

Syl. Was she clever?

Quill. If she was, she kept so dark about it, that I never found it out, nor the public either. She was what we call a society star—a very gorgeous creature—a widow about five and forty—weighed 180, and wouldn't play anything but Juliet and Rosalind, and occasion-

ally Hamlet for a benefit. Oh, she was a kitten. We went West and tackled St. Jo. and Omaha. She would have been a good card for the circus business; rolled herself up in the American flag, and all that sort of thing. Died all over the stage, and eat beefsteak and onions for supper. Splendid creature, but she didn't draw.

Syl. Possibly you were not up to all the advertising dodges.

Quill. Not up to—My dear boy, if there is one thing in this world I am a little better posted upon than another, it is advertising. I had long notices from the New York press—wrote 'em myself, and got them set up at the job office, asked all the country editors to drink, and the cleanest of them to dinner. Set off four dollars' worth of fireworks on benefit nights—got up a romantic story about her early history and trials—she ought to have been tried for obtaining money under false pretenses. Had the same set of diamonds (best Bowery water) presented to her nine times by nine prominent citizens in nine different towns—serenaded her with numberless brass bands. Hired a shooting gallery, and got her marksmanship in the paper, and presented her next night with a rifle. Had four bouquets every night and a couple of complimentary benefits per week, tendered by the Mayor and nob's of the place—and still she didn't draw.

Floy. Why not? If there's any virtue in humbug, all that ought to succeed.

Quill. There's plenty of virtue in humbug. Barnum made a fortune with his woolly horse; but he had the horse to begin with—that French joker, who made fifteen kinds of soups out of an old boot, had the boot to begin with. We busted, because my star, although she might have done for the Goddess of Liberty in a circus procession, hadn't the faintest glimmering of dramatic talent. I couldn't make the soup, because I didn't have the boot.

Jessie. And what became of the lady?

Quill. Oh, she married a merchant prince in Kalamazoo, and withdrew the light of her talent from an unappreciative public.

Floy. And you have never seen her since?

Quill. Oh, yes; saw her about a week ago in a Bowery beer garden. She was singing comic songs, and her merchant prince was slinging beer.

Syl. So the Napoleon of blowers was beaten for once!

Quill. Yes, sir. Fifteen years ago the scheme would have answered—but dramatic art is nothing, if not progressive. The time for imposing on our country cousins with mushroom stars and threadbare plays has gone by. There is a demand for novelty—even the provinces now see first-class acting in the well-organized combinations that are giving performances with metropolitan completeness in little country towns. They know the difference now. The demand has been created—the supply must inevitably follow. So, good-bye forever to the silly twaddle about the old, palmy days of the drama and the superiority of the stock company.

Jessie. Then you don't believe in the decadence of the drama?

Quill All rot. I tell you, the drama has never been as wholesome in morals, as elevating in precept, as strong in intelligence, as it is to-day.

Syl. Then you think the drama might be made a powerful means of moral culture.

Quill. No, I don't. The over-driven world has more sermons than diversions, as it is, and the drama belongs essentially to the dominion of art, not ethics. People don't go to church to laugh, nor to the theatre to pray. Let both keep to their vocations! There is abundant room and abundant necessity for both, and no need of their clashing.

Floy. I believe you are right. I know I go to the theatre for pleasure, not for instruction or sermons.

Quill. To be sure you do. People don't go to the theatre to pray, any more than they do to an art gallery. The public seek the theatre as a place of amusement. They want to be lifted for the moment out of the dullness and pettiness of routine—out of the heavy atmosphere of daily life into the region of sentiment, of romance, of adventure. They want to escape for awhile from familiar commonplace realities, and be refreshed by glimpses of an ideal world, fairer and brighter than that in which their daily lot is cast.

[*All applaud.*]

Floy. Bravo! Why, Mr. Driverton, the American managers should employ you as a defender of the drama.

Quill. The drama needs no defender. It is older than history, and it will live, flourish and amuse centuries after its detractors have solved the great problem.

Floy. You wouldn't have said the drama needed no defender, if you had heard what D'Grinder said about it last Sunday.

Quill. I have heard a good many clergymen preach against the drama, and I have yet to hear a single argument advanced on their side. It is all iteration, and the best clergymen are among the drama's best patrons. This unchristian Christianity makes me ill. Who ever hears an actor decrying the church; and, again, let any public calamity overshadow the land, let the cry for charity come from any direction, and whose hand is first and deepest into his purse, the actor's or the clergyman's? If some of these sectarian divines would preach less and do more, they might end by becoming as good practical Christians as the actors they denounce. While I have the greatest respect for religion, I believe in the practical kind. By their fruits ye shall know them.

[*All applaud.*]

Syl. Well done, Quill; that's a better sermon than ever old Grinder gave us.

[*Band off L. Trombone, clarionette, etc., struggling with "The Girl I Left Behind me."*]

Max. [*Off L.*] Huld on. Sthop the band.

Floy. Oh, here comes the band! I guess the speakers have arrived.

Jessie. Hadn't we better go, Floy?

Floy. I suppose we ought to; but I confess, I'd like to remain.

Quill. Then remain, by all means; there's no danger. The average political speaker is quite harmless—to friend or foe.

Floy. Well, I'll tell you, we'll go and take a scamper through the Park, and be back in time to hear the speeches. We'll happen in on them accidentally, and not as if we had waited for them. Will you help me to mount? Did you ever put a young lady on her horse?

[*SYL. and JESSIE exit R. 2 E.*]

Quill. Did I? Well, if there's one thing in this world that I do know a little more about than another, it's vaulting a young lady gracefully into a side-saddle, draping her habit in classic folds, finding the stirrup for her dainty little foot, and disposing the reins correctly in her fairy fingers. Why, I was taking a morning ride one day with the Queen of the Cannibal Islands—

[*Exeunt R. while he speaks.*]

[*Band plays.*]

Max. [*Without.*] Halt. Sthop de band. [*Enter MAX, L. Goes to the door at L. 2 E., and calls in.*] Landlord, ein grosser bier.

Landlord. [*Off.*] Ya, ein grosser. [*Enter LANDLORD with enormous glass of beer. Gives it to MAX.*] Ten cents.

Max. [*Drinking.*] Charge it to de Campaign Committee.

Quill. [*Entering L.*] There she goes, sailing away like a deer—as she is. That girl rides like a Comanche. [*Sees MAX.*] Why, I didn't notice that cigar sign before. [*MAX turns.*] Hello! it's alive! Why, Dutchy, what are you made up for?

Max. Vy, didn't you know? I vas de leader of dot band. Oh, yes. Ve got a fine band, I don't suppose. Ve play for de bolitical meeting dis afternoon.

Quill. What does Mr. Alford say to your outside engagements?

Max. Oh, he don't care somedings about tings like dat. He's a bully boss—only I don't like working in dat house ven he vants me to put on dat libery shtable shuit. Couldn't you got me ein job down by der brinding office?

Quill. Want to be a printer, eh?

Max. Ya; brinder, or editor or somedings. I don't care, so long as I don't got wear a libery shtable shuit and answer dose bells.

Quill. Well, I'll see about it, if you get Mr. Alford's leave; but I'm busy now.

[*Exit MAX L. 2 E. Enter SYL. R. 2 E.*]

Syl. Pencil freshly pointed, plenty of paper—I'm ready for the fray. *Quill*, my boy, I'm armed cap-a-pie.

Quill. Foolscap-a-pie. Well, we'll soon be busy now.

[*Enter DURHAM.*]

Durham. Why, hello, here's Syl!

Syl. How are you, Percy? [*They shake hands.*] You know Mr. Driverton?

Quill. I've had the pleasure of meeting Mr. Durham [*They shake hands.*] Now, then, how about this meeting? Where's Buffem?

Syl. And Stuffem?

Percy. I'm afraid they won't get here. There has been an accident on the road.

Syl. Any one hurt?

Percy. Oh, no; nothing more serious than the delay, which is provoking enough at such a time as this.

Quill. Col. Smithers is engineering this thing, I believe. What does he intend to do?

Percy. He don't know anything about it. I just received a telegram, but I shan't say anything about it, as they may come, after all.

Quill. Quite right. No use in disappointing people. Is Col. Smithers acquainted with either of the gentlemen?

Percy. No, we none of us know them, except, of course, by reputation.

Quill. Oh, that of course.

Percy. Is Mr. Alford to be here?

Quill. No; but after the meeting he will entertain the Committee and discuss the campaign. Let's stroll up to the station, Syl, and see if there is any news of the orators. [*Exit QUILL and SYL.*]

Percy. I wish I knew what it was best to do about this meeting. Ah, here comes Smithers.

Enter SMITHERS.

Percy. How are you, Colonel?

Smithers. Ah, Mr. Durham, good evening? None of the fair sex upon the grounds yet, I see.

Percy. Do you expect ladies?

Smithers. Undoubtedly, my dear sir—undoubtedly. The presence and countenance of lovely woman lifts politics from the slough of pot-house degradation to the higher plane of æsthetic—ah—ahem—occupation.

Percy. Who do you expect.

Smithers. There will be Elder Harkins and his charming wife; Major Nobbins and his fascinating daughters! Assistant Supervisor Bobbs and his highly cultured sisters; Judge Buggs and his accomplished nieces. You have met the Buggs?

Percy. Frequently, at a hotel.

Smithers. Lawyer Shortgrass and his angelic and interesting daughters; Miss Shurdle, the wonderful elocutionist, and, I trust, the distinguished ladies of the Alford family.

Percy. Isn't it nearly time to commence?

Smithers. Yes, I don't know what can be detaining the orators of the evening.

Percy [*Aside.*] It will interest me to observe how Smithers will deal with the dilemma he will shortly be brought face to face with.

[*Drum and fife heard off R.*]

Smithers. Here comes the Workingmen's Club of Hexter's.

Enter, in possession, Club with torches and music—a transparency inscribed "Workingmen who Work."

Leader of Club. Three cheers for Col. Smithers.

[*All cheer.*]

Smithers. Gentlemen, this is the proudest moment of my life. Thanks, thanks for the honor you have done me.

Ladies and gentlemen enter and take seats on platform.

Smithers. I wonder where the distinguished guests are?

Enter another Club, fife, drum, torches and transparency—"The People's Club" take their place L., opposite Workingmen's Club.

Leader. Three cheers for Col. Smithers.

Smithers. Gentlemen, this is the proudest moment of my life. Thanks, thanks for the honor you have done me. [*As the Marshals are arranging their men, SMITHERS mounts the platform and continues*] Ladies and gentlemen; fellow-citizens! I am proud to meet you here to-night. I may say, this is the proudest moment of my life. Our distinguished guests, Major Buffem and Dr. Stuffem—

Workingmen's Leader. Three cheers for Buffem!

[*Workingmen's Club cheer.*

People's Leader. Three cheers for Stuffem. [*People's Club cheer.*

[*Workingmen's Club groans, and other Club returns the compliment.*

Smithers. While we are waiting for the distinguished orators, the band will please favor us with music.

[*Band plays—Cheers and voices outside—"Hurrah for BUFFEM"—*
"Hurrah for STUFFEM."]

[*Enter hastily QUILL and SYL. with dusters and valises. As they enter, all on platform rise and wave hands and handkerchiefs—great cheering—Band plays "Hail to the Chief."—SMITHERS comes forward, shakes hands with them, and escorts them to platform.*]

Smithers. Order! The meeting will please come to order. We have with us to-night two orators whose fame is world-wide. Though I am a Colonel, and one of our guests is a Major—

A voice. Hurrah! for the Army worm!

[*All laugh.*

Smithers. I trust there will be no disorder. Major Buffem, the distinguished orator from Maginley's Corner, will address the Republican voters on the issues of the day. He will be followed by Dr. Stuffem, who will represent the Democratic side of the question. In the words of the immortal Shakespeare: "Hear them for their cause, and be silent that you may hear."

A voice. Hurrah for Shakespeare.

Smithers. When I gaze upon this intelligent audience, I feel that, whatever may betide, the future of this great country is safe. To the down-trodden poor of miserable Europe, I would say—"Come to this land of milk and honey; come drink—[*All rush forward.*] I spoke figuratively, my friends. I will now make way for the orators of the evening. I will introduce to you, Major Buffem.

[*QUILL advances, amid cheers and groans from the crowd.*]

Quill. Order please! I esteem myself fortunate in being permitted to address you, my friends; for never, in the course of a long and I will say useful, forensic experience, has it been my happiness to

confront so intelligent, so cultured, I may say, so æsthetic an audience as I see before me now. [*Cheers.*] Gentlemen, I stand before you to arraign the party which for the last twenty years has misruled this great republic—a party that has saddled our industries with an enormous debt, that has committed crimes and violations of law without number. Need I say that I refer to the Republican party—

[*Great surprise and excitement. SYL pulls QUILL's coat-tail.*]

Quill. What's the matter?

Syl. [*Aside to QUILL.*]. My goodness, you are ruining everything. Buffem is a red-hot Republican.

Quill. [*Aside.*]. The deuce he is. [*Aloud.*]. This, my friends, is what my distinguished opponent, Doctor Stuffem, will tell you; but I stand here to refute his arguments, and to point with pride to the record of this party where the few mistakes it has committed, like patches on a fair skin, only serve to throw into broader relief, the clearness and purity against which they are outlined—and if any Republican has made an error, can we not excuse it in the face of that glorious record—excuse it, in a son of Adam, who, like his illustrious ancestor beneath the miscalled tree of life, has been tempted beyond his power, and has fallen as he did. Our party, like the lovely eagle, that from its home in some craggy mountain-top, rises into the blue firmament, ever shrieking as it goes “Excelsior! Excelsior!” until it is lost in the misty azure of Heaven's own battlements. [*Pauses and takes a drink of water.*]. This is, and must be a government of the people. Who pays our taxes?

All. We do.

Quill. Who farms our lands and runs our manufactories?

All. We do.

Quill. Who builds our jails and penitentiaries?

All. We do.

Quill. And who fills them?

All. We do! [*Sudden excitement.*]. No—no!

Quill. But I will for the present make way for my distinguished friend, Doctor Stuffem, for although his principles are damnable, his heart is in the right place, and I trust you will hear him as patiently as you have heard me.

[*QUILL steps back, presented with bouquets and congratulations.*]

Smithers. Fellow-citizens! Dr. Stuffem, the Democratic Demosthenes from Doghouseville, will now claim your attention.

[*SYL. steps forward, amidst cheers and groans.*]

Syl. Ladies and gentlemen, you have listened to the words of my illustrious predecessor. You have heard his elaborate defense of a party which is rotten to the core. You have drunk in his windy, wordy eloquence—eloquence, gentlemen, whose inspiration comes straight from the villainous liquor for which his native place, Maginley's Corners, and his native bar-room therein, are so widely and justly celebrated.

Quill. Do you mean, sir—

Syl. I mean that you are either drunk or a born idiot.

Quill. Sir, you cannot rise to the dignity of my contempt.

Syl. Nothing could sink me to your most exalted level.

Quill. Dr. Stuffem.

Syl. Major Buffem.

[*Voices in the crowd encouraging them to fight—both speak together violently gesticulating.*]

Quill. [*Speaking with Syl.*] Ladies and gentlemen, this man is a fair sample of the party he represents. Like it, he is destitute of principle, of honor, of everything that can render either a party or man respectable.

Syl. [*Speaking with Quill.*] I stand upon my rights as an American citizen, and no swash-buckler, be his name Buffem, or Huffem, or Tuffem, shall put me down. To you, fellow-citizens, I appeal, confident that you will support me.

Enter PERCY DURHAM, hastily.

Percy. Here they come!

Smithers. Who?

Percy. Why, Buffem and Stuffem.

Quill. I guess we'd better get out.

[*Both descend from platform.*]

Smithers. Then these men are impostors. They have been playing upon us.

[*Voices in the crowd threaten them, and crowd rush in and attack QUILL and SYL.—great confusion—closed in.*]

SCENE II.—*Exterior of country tavern in 1st Grooves. Action supposed to be contemporaneous with conclusion of preceding.*

Enter SANDY and BILLY.

Sandy. I tell you what it is, pard, we're just a wasting of our wallyble time here. We were flats to leave New York.

Billy. Vy, New York was too hot to hold us since that crib was cracked in Grand Street. The cops were just a looking out for us, and I never knowed the moment I might feel a touch on my shoulder. The air of the city vas a getting uncommon unwholesome.

Sandy. So it vas, but we might a gone to Albany. There's nothing to be done in a place like this here. A professional gentleman would starve to death. There ain't swag enough in the whole village to pay a first-class cracksman for lifting it.

Billy. Oh, ain't there? Don't you make any blooming error, cully. Didn't you see that gal's diamonds over at the meeting?

Sandy. Paste, most likely.

Billy. No fear. I know who she is. That's old Potter Alford's niece, one of the biggest heiresses in New York, and you can go your pile that any shiners she flashes will be genuine.

Sandy. Well, 'sposin they are, and I'll not deny but that there were some tempting headlights among them, how are we to work it. Where does she live?

Billy. I know the house. 'Bout a mile out of the village, and a lonesome place. Only one man servant, and he's a Dutchman, and would sell his soul for a glass of lager. By thunder, if we work him right, I shouldn't wonder if we could not get a plan of the house out of him!

Sandy. That nd be something like. [*Fife heard off.*] Hush! what's that?

Enter MAX, R., blowing fife, rather intoxicated.

Billy. Dutchey himself, by jingo! This is something like luck!

Sandy. Hollo, Schneider! How you vas?

Max. I vas very well; but my name vas not Schneider; it vas Max.

Sandy. All the same in Dutch. Tip us a flipper, old fellow. I'm glad to see you.

Max. I don't know who you vas.

Billy. Oh, we're two gentlemen, amateurs, with a decided taste for music, and we're always proud to meet the profession.

Max. Ish dot so?

Sandy. Ya, dot vash so. Do you know that's a splendid band you have. We were listening to it.

Max. Ya, dot vas a very goot band.

Sandy. Now I suppose you must make a pretty comfortable thing out of a band like that.

Max. Nein. I lead the band for art, not for dose dirty dollars; I vas an artist ven I blays de band; other times I vas Mr. Alford's servant.

Billy. Ah, Mr. Alford's servant! He's a rich man, isn't he?

Max. Vell, I dinks so, some. He vas richer than notings!

Billy. He must be. Now that daughter of his had diamonds on worth—I'm afraid to guess how much.

Max. She's his niece, nod his daughter. Ya, she very rich, too.

Billy. Ah, she lives with him, I suppose?

Max. Ya, she lives with him.

Sandy. And I suppose you know where she keeps her diamonds?

Max. Ya, I know. Vat I don't know about the Alford's house, ain't worth knowing. Oh, I'm a pretty smart fellow!

Billy. I can see you are. Blessed, if ever I knowed a man with as intelligent a face as you've got!

Max. Ya, I vas very intellectual.

Sandy. You couldn't get a chance for me and my mate to look at the diamonds, could you?

Max. Vat for?

Billy. Well, you see, we're artists too. Both bred in the jewelry business, and we've a great taste in precious stones; what you call

connoisseurs, you know. We take just the same delight in looking at handsome diamonds as you take in your band.

Max. Ish dot so?

Sandy. Yes, and you know artists should always help one another.

Max. Ya, dot vash so.

Billy. Well, will you?

Max. Will I what?

Sandy. Fix it so as we can get a squint at those diamonds?

Max. [*Winking.*] Nein, I vas too smart.

Billy. You are smart, that's a fact. Well, of course, it's a big thing to ask a stranger; though, when I sees an artist, my heart goes out to him, and I'd do anything in life to make him comfortable.

Max. You vas a goot man.

Billy. You bet, I'm nothing short of it; and I'll tell you what I'll do. If you'll fix it so we can see those diamonds and handle them, you know, so as to get the full benefit of them, I'll give you a cornet my brother used to play before the king of Prooshia.

Max. You will?

Billy. I will; and, mind you, it's not to every one I'd give that instrument. But I know an artist when I sees one.

Max. You vas a goot man.

Sandy. Come, it's dry talking here. Let's go inside and have a drop of something.

Billy. Aye, do; and you can give us a tune on that thing. I'm just dead gone on music.

Max. Do you mean it?

Sandy. Just come in, and see if we don't mean it.

Max. Vell, seeing your artists—

Billy [*Low.*] Any policeman in New York will tell you that.

Max. And, since it's warm—

Sandy. Well.

Max. I don't got any objections.

[*They go off arm-in-arm into inn.*]

SCENE III.—*Apartment in ALFORD'S house, handsomely furnished.*

Door C., window L., draped with curtains, and disclosing view of Hudson. Time, Evening.

SYLVESTER and JESSIE discovered.

Jessie. I repeat, what you urge is impossible, Syl; and if you knew what pain it gives me to refuse you, you would cease endeavoring to shake me in a resolution which is irrevocable.

Syl. Because Mr. Alford objects?

Jessie. Exactly; because Mr. Alford objects.

Syl. Yet you say you love me.

Jessie. You know I do.

Syl. And yet you refuse to marry me without Mr. Alford's consent?

Jessie. Absolutely and unconditionally, dear. Oh, Syl, we are both young, and can afford to wait. Let me be wise for both of us, for once. Mr. Alford has been so good, so kind, to both of us, that to wantonly disappoint him in what has evidently been a long-cherished hope would be the basest ingratitude.

Syl. Well, you won't refuse me one little kiss, to live on till better days dawn for us.

Jessie. Poor boy, I have to refuse you more than my heart likes already. [*They embrace.*]

Enter QUILL, C.

Syl. The deuce!

Quill. Keep right on, just as if I had not come in. Among the minor ills of life, I know of few things more trying than a kiss interrupted before it reaches its natural and legitimate fruition by the spasmodic movement of the lips.

Syl. Quill, you are incorrigible.

Quill. A lovely night, Miss Clayton. Have you had a pleasant walk?

Jessie. Yes. We have just been taking a stroll in the grounds, and I was surprised to find it had grown so late. You saw us, I suppose?

Quill. I can see nothing by moonlight.

Syl. What?

Jessie. How strange!

Quill. Did you never hear of moon-blindness? I was afflicted that way some years ago, while imprudently sleeping all night on the deck of a pirate proach, off Batavia.

Syl. Well, I'm glad moon-blindness exists in your case. It will insure moon-dumbness about some things that are better not referred to.

Quill. I am discretion itself, even where my sympathies are not so strongly enlisted as they are in this case.

Jessie [*Offering her hand.*] Thank you. I believe in your sincerity; and, indeed, we need a friend. I suppose you know how we are situated? It is no secret in this house.

Quill. Entirely. Your case is similar to that of a young lady for whom I found a happy issue from even a more formidable difficulty. I met her when I was surveying the route of a railroad in Siam, some years since—

Jessie. Please spare us any more of those stories, Mr. Driverton. Do not be angry with me if I say that I have seen through your levity, and discovered the true-hearted man beneath. And if ever I should be in need of a strong arm to defend me, an honest heart to understand me, or a quick brain to aid me—

Quill. And Syl were absent?

Jessie. I should come to you.

Quill. Thank you, Miss Clayton. I esteem you warmly, and value your good opinion highly. Your words, and the good-will which

dictates them are among the few brighter rays which have illumined a life that has seen more of cloud than of sunshine.

Jessie. Your life has been a hard one, then?

Quill. Well, yes; at an age when most boys are at school, I was thrown into the world. I might have drifted into crime, but my instincts I believe were good; so I drifted into a printing office instead. In which there is a difference morally.

Syl. Slightly.

Quill. Very slightly, as you observe; but the moral distinction does exist. As my friend Von Bismark once remarked to me—we were strolling up the *unter den Linden* to keep a dinner engagement we had with Emperor William. Quill, said he; Well, Mark, said I—

Jessie. I see, Mr. Driverton, it is impossible for you to forego your besetting sin. You Bright Bohemians are like Kaleidoscopes. With every revolution of thought, there comes a new revelation of feeling or fancy, each differing from the last, but all so bright, so charming that we must admire, although we know them to be chimerical.

Quill. Your practical people don't seem to appreciate the beauties of a vivid imagination.

Jessie. On the contrary, as efforts of imagination we appreciate your stories very highly. Good-night to both. [*Exit JESSIE L.*]

Quill. Syl, I am your friend; and besides being your friend, I am a prophet of the prophets, and I prophesy that your little love affair will end all right.

Syl. How and when?

Quill. Somehow and sometime.

Enter FLOY.

Syl. [*Low.*] Hush, not a word before her.

Floy. Well, good people, you've gone into a new business, I see.

Quill. Oh yes: I've been putting my friend here up to some of the dodges of journalistic life.

Floy. Some of the dodges of oratorical life, you mean—when the orator has to dodge over-ripe hen fruit and dead cats.

Quill. Oh that was only an episode. I wonder where people do find unsavory missiles ready to their hand on every occasion.

Syl. They grow for the occasion. Well, good-bye. To cut a ridiculous figure is bad enough, but to cut it when Floy is around, is unendurable. [*Exit.*]

Quill. He has a wholesome respect for you. Now I never yet found myself in an embarrassing position. I consider embarrassment unprofessional.

Floy [*Inquisitively.*] What is your profession, Mr. Driverton?

Quill. Anything.

Floy. Anything?

Quill. Perhaps I should rather have said everything. I am a free lance in the world of letters—a bit of flotsam on the ocean of art, and what I am to-day, I was not yesterday, nor shall I be to-morrow.

Floy. You seem to speak bitterly, Mr. Driverton!

Quill. Bitterly? Not a whit! I am free of the most glorious guild in the world. I have lived yesterday—I am living now, I shall live to-morrow, and I have wealth enough to buy and sell a dozen Rothschilds. Why should I be bitter?

Floy. Wealth enough to—are you so very rich, Mr. Driverton?

Quill. Perhaps if I went down to your uncle's bank, he might hesitate to open a credit for me—or rather he would not hesitate a moment, and he would be a great fool if he did. Yet I can create millionaires at will, and it is to me merely a matter of a stroke of a pen whether the heiress whom the fortune-hunting Lord Topboots is going to marry in the romance I am writing, has ten thousand or ten million.

Floy. Yet it is an important consideration to Lord Topboots.

Quill. Very.

Floy. Then do you approve of poor men marrying heiresses?

Quill. That is a question too broad to be passed upon in a word. Abstractly considered, I suppose either might say: "What matters it, which has the dross, so there is enough for both, but I would never marry a woman who was richer than myself."

Floy. You could not find one.

Quill. In romantic wealth, scarcely. In real wealth, very readily. In fact, I am condemning myself to celibacy, for it would be impossible to find a woman—a lady I mean—poorer than myself.

Floy. You take it coolly.

Quill. The celibacy? Oh, certainly; I am used to that.

Floy. No, I mean the poverty.

Quill. Oh, well, I'm used to that, too.

Floy. You are an American, are you not?

Quill. To the best of my knowledge and belief.

Floy. Where were you born, Mr. Driverton?

Quill. The latitude's rather uncertain,

And the longitude equally vague;
Yet the fellow I pity who knows not the city,
The beautiful city of Prague.

Floy. Prague? Why, that's the capital of Bohemia.

Quill. Hence, my capital. I am nothing if not Bohemian.

Floy. Oh, now you are charming—I have so wanted to meet a Bohemian.

Quill. As you would like to meet a lion?

Floy. I shouldn't in the least like to meet a lion.

Quill. Well, for lion read kangaroo, or any other strange and inoffensive animal.

Floy. You wrong me in that, Mr. Driverton. Do you think that I have no feeling? Do you think that I do not know that all those beautiful waifs and strays of fancy and sentiment which drift through our magazines, and ripple up in dark corners of our newspapers are all dated from Bohemia in invisible ink.

Quill. Yes, as a friend of mine, with more taste than education,

once said, "Who is that Anon.? He writes some mighty pretty things."

Floy [*Laughing.*] He does, indeed. And to think that so many gems are lost for want of worthy setting.

Quill. That is natural enough.

"We count the broken lyres that rest,
Where the sweet wailing singers slumber;
But o'er their silent sister's breast,
The wild flowers, who will stoop to number?
A few could touch the magic string,
And noisy fame was prond to win them;
Alas, for those that never sing,
But die with all their music in them."

Floy. You read poetry beautifully, Mr. Driverton.

Quill. If there is one thing in this world I know a little more about than another, it is poetry. I've even dabbled in verse a little myself. Perhaps the best, certainly the most popular thing I ever did in the metrical line was a fragment—a mere fancy, you know—beginning—let me see—

Floy. Oh, you have not forgotten it?

Quill. Surely I can recall those lines. Oh, yes, I have it: "Oh, the snow, the beautiful—"

Floy. Now, Mr. Driverton.

Quill. I trust you do not question my veracity?

Floy. Oh, no, quite the contrary.

Quill. I should be really distressed to think that any one doubted the authorship of that fragment.

Floy. It would be a pity. But as you do seem to be a man of taste, you shall see my scrap-book, and that is a favor I accord to very few; and, as you read so well, you shall read me some of my favorites. [*Crossing and getting book from table.*] My favorite lines are by that prolific author "Anon.," but they are sweetly pretty, and I think you will like them. They give such a charming description of Bohemia

Quill. I shall be sure to like them, since they are favorites of yours.

Floy [*Turning over leaves.*] You will like them for a better reason than that.

Quill [*Aside and starting.*] My own verses!

Floy. Now, Mr. Driverton, you must read them to me.

Quill [*Aside.*] Was ever flattery sweeter or more subtle than this?

Floy. Well.

Quill. Oh, yes, I beg you pardon. [*Reads.*]

"We have our bright side though: what other
Land furnishes friendships so dear,
Where every man is a brother,
And every brother a peer."

Where genius, in musical cadence,
 Courts beauties none other can see;
 Can the cold outer world woo its maidens
 As sweetly as we?

"Our tastes may be broad or æsthetic,
 Our weapons the brush or the quill,
 Our temperament light or pathetic,
 Our assets a coin or a bill;
 We still are the freest of freemen,
 To sing, or to paint, or to write,
 Society's Sphynx, the Bohemian
 And Ishmaelite.

"We may step on the stage to amuse you,
 Ye dwellers beyond our confines;
 We may write to extol or abuse you,
 We may tickle your ears with our lines.
 We may sing to you, paint you in colors,
 Write books to be bound for your shelves;
 All this you can have for your dollars—
 You can't have ourselves.

"As rivers that flow on unmingled,
 The smooth and the turbulent tide,
 Our lives from the world's life is singled,
 Although the streams run side by side.
 We are with you, and taste in your presence
 A nectar your wealth cannot give,
 Bohemia's magical essence,
 In whose breath we live."

Floy. Ain't they sweet?

Quill. They give a very fair picture of modern Bohemia.

Floy. But ain't they sweet?

Quill. I—I don't know.

Floy. I thought you knew more about poetry than anything else.
 I think they are just lovely. I could love the man that wrote those lines.

Quill. [*Aside.*] I wonder if she could. [*Aloud.*] I am astonished that they appeal so strangely to you, Miss Wolverton. I should scarcely have thought they were quite in your style.

Floy. Why not? I am a Bohemian myself—at least, if a girl with a prosaic quarter of a million can be anything so pleasant and romantic.

Quill. It would be easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich girl to pass the portals of Bohemia.

Floy [*Sighing.*] I suppose so. What a rooted antipathy your guild must have to money.

Quill. We regard a five-dollar bill as a ferocious animal to be eagerly hunted, and at once annihilated when caught.

Floy. I suppose all your friends have the same scruples about wedding heiresses that you have; or are those scruples peculiar to you?

Quill. I am, perhaps, eccentric in that respect.

Floy. But your determination holds good.

Quill. What determination?

Floy. The determination never to marry an heiress.

Quill. I am never very likely to be tempted.

Floy. You cannot tell.

Quill. But I would prize my self-respect more than her dollars.

Floy. Or your love. Suppose you were in love with her.

Quill. That would certainly complicate matters, but it is scarcely a supposable case.

Floy. Why not?

Quill. Oh, heiresses are always cross-eyed, or freckled, or hump-backed; or, if they do happen to be decent-looking, they have some objectionable characteristic, which none but a confirmed fortune-hunter could put up with.

Floy [*Rising and dropping sweeping courtesy.*] Thank you.

Quill. What for?

Floy. In behalf of myself and my sister heiresses, for your flattering estimate of the tribe.

Quill. I beg your pardon, I am sure—I'm always putting my foot in it with you, somehow. First, I took you for the servant girl—

Floy. And now you take me for a portionless damsel.

Quill. You are nice enough to be one.

Floy. You mean I could captivate my swain without a dowry. Well, do you know I find that dowry a dead weight to carry—a most severe handicap in the race for a settlement with the man of my choice.

Quill. Oh, there is a man of your choice?

Floy. Certainly; I'm never without at least one. Suppose we take a turn in the garden. It is lovely moonlight.

Quill. With all my heart.

Floy. And you'll say some more verses to me, won't you? They sound just too lovely by moonlight.

[*Exit c.*—*QUILL opening door.*]

Quill. Spouting poetry under the moon to a pretty girl with a big fortune. This isn't conducting a political canvass. Quill, my boy, take care.

[*Exit c.*]

Enter MARY ANN.

Mary Ann. Now, where's that young electioneerer. Master wants him to write his speech, and there he is, sparking in the garden with Miss Florence. More betoken, it ought to be me he was a sparking, for it was by reason of his taking Miss Florence for me the first time he seen her, that he fell in love with her. It's downright dishonest of him, trifling with a young girl's feelings in this way, and real mean of a young lady to steal a girl's name to

make up to a fellow with. I think he must be rich though, for I seen him give a ten-dollar bill to a poor beggar-woman with three children, no later than yesterday. Maybe it was he lent Mr. Alford the money to pay up his debts and put the bank straight.

Enter ALFORD.

Alford. Well, have you found Mr. Driverton?

Mary Ann. He'll be with you directly, sir. [*Aside.*] Though he has treated me mean, I'm not the girl to spoil sport.

Alford. What is he doing?

Mary Ann. Well, sir, if you must know, he's sparking in the garden with Miss Florence.

Alford. Sparking! not he. He's probably trying to interview her for a fashion article. His head is always in his work. He has not an atom of sentiment or romance in his whole composition.

Mary Ann. Lor', hasn't he? Didn't I have a lucky escape?

Alford. What, has he been talking to you?

Mary Ann. Yes, sir; and axing me most impertinent questions. Axing what wages do you pay me, and was they more than I got in the ould country, and when did I come out, and what sort of a ship did I come out in, and how did I like it, and twenty thousand things of the same sort.

Alford. Just so—he was trying to interview you.

Mary Ann. Lor', sir—do you tell me so?

Alford. Nothing less.

Mary Ann. And is it going to put me in the paper, he is?

Alford. He's sure to, if he hasn't done so already.

Mary Ann. Oh, worra! isn't that a cruel disgrace to be put upon a decent girl, that never did nothing—to be put in the paper the same as if I was a thief or a murderer, or a play-actor, or a politician. [*ALFORD coughs uneasily.*] Well, then, if he puts me in, I'll make him smart for it.

Enter QUILL and FLOY.

Quill. Did you wish to see me, sir?

Alford. Yes, Driverton, about that article for to-morrow's paper, you know—

Quill. It's written, and probably in type by this time.

Alford. Well, you are prompt, I must say.

Quill. If there is one quality upon which I pride myself more than another, it is my promptitude. I recollect when I was quite a lad—some of my qualities develop so early, you see—I was a midshipman in the British navy at the time, I quelled what threatened to be a formidable mutiny in its incipience. I had given an order to a seaman about some trivial matter, I said—referring to a rope he was coiling—"Take a bight in that rope—"

Floy. What a funny order.

Quill. "Come here and bite your own rope," he said. Merely remarking, "This is mutiny," I snatched a belaying pin from the

rack, and with one well-directed blow laid the stalwart ruffian a lifeless figure at my feet.

Mary Ann. Lor'!

Quill. I was publicly thanked by the captain and officers for my intrepid conduct on the occasion. But that is a mere detail.

Floy. And the sailor?

Quill. What sailor?

Floy. The one who wouldn't bite the rope.

Quill. Oh! His skull was fractured, and the surgeon gave him up. However, I succeeded, in a very delicate trepanning operation, and he recovered. He became very much attached to me.

Alford. Why, you must be a man of extremely varied attainments. Are you a doctor, also?

Quill. My dear sir, if there is one thing in this world I do know a little more about than another, it is doctoring. My medical profession has brought me some queer experiences. But I tire you.

Alford. On the contrary; you interest me inexpressibly.

Floy. And you amuse me immensely.

Mary Ann. He frightens me. [*Suddenly.*] Oh, sir, you won't do it, now, will you?

Quill. Do what?

Mary Ann. I'm poor, sir, but I'm honest; and I've nothing but my character, and that's good—and it would break my heart, sir.

Floy. Why, what's the matter?

Quill. I don't know what she's driving at.

Mary Ann. He's going to put me in the paper, miss—

Alford. Mary Ann has a mortal horror of seeing her name in print.

Quill. Well, she never shall, by any agency of mine, for I don't know what it is.

Mary Ann. Thank you, sir.

[*Exit MARY ANN.*]

Alford. She says you have been interviewing her.

Quill. Very possibly. That is a matter of habit. I interview everybody—everything. The day before I came here I interviewed our landlady's cat.

Floy. Now, Mr. Driverton.

Quill. I assure you I did, and got about a column of very interesting Sunday reading out of her, too. Do you know why cats make such a noise at night?

Floy. No; I should like to.

Quill. So should I. That's just where Pussy's information broke down. I should have liked to supplement it with some external evidence.

Alford. But about your medical experience, Mr. Driverton?

Quill. Oh, to be sure. It occurred—the particular instance that presents itself to my mind—on the steamer coming from Rio. I was interpreting for a Cuban sugar planter and a Chinese mandarin, who were trying to do business together, though neither spoke a word of any language but his own.

Floy. And do you speak Spanish?

Alford. And Chinese?

Quill. Fluently, sir—both of them. Eleven dialects of the latter. But I shall never get on with my story if you interrupt me about such petty details.

Alford. Well, go on.

Quill. A lady rushed up to me in a most violent state of excitement—almost hysterical, indeed—"O doctor, doctor," she almost screamed, "come to my cabin at once; my darling Jenny is dying!"

Floy. Ah, poor thing; her little girl, I suppose?

Quill. No; her little French poodle. I was quite annoyed at being disturbed for such a frivolous reason; but that is one of the annoyances we doctors are subject to. People are so apt to measure every one's feelings by their own.

Floy. You saved the poodle, I suppose?

Quill. No; I poisoned it. It was in the habit of barking all night, and I was glad of the opportunity of getting rid of it.

Alford. You must have traveled a great deal?

Quill. Everywhere—been everywhere—seen everything, and done all that there is to do.

Alford. And you are so young; only—

Quill. Twenty-six.

Alford. Prodigious! And in that short life you have been a physician, head cook to the Cannibal Islanders, an officer in the British Navy, and a newspaper man. You must have started early in life?

Quill. I have been a man of action almost since the time I was weaned.

Floy. Are your parents living?

Quill. I am almost an orphan, Miss Wolverton. My mother, I cannot remember, and my father, an humble, simple, seafaring man, but the best father in the world, I see but seldom. Such as I am, circumstances have made me—circumstances which have marred many a fairer, clearer bit of stuff than they have had to work upon in me.

Floy. Never blame circumstances, then; for, if they are responsible for your bringing up, they have turned out a finished gentleman and a man of honor.

Quill [*Deeply moved.*] Thank-you, Miss Wolverton.

Alford. Hello, miss—what is this? Do you want to turn our young friend's brain with your flattery?

Floy. They are no flatteries, uncle; and they will have no other effect on our friend than they ought to have. There is no fear of him. Good-night, and pleasant dreams to both of you. [*Exit R.*]

Quill. She speaks the truth, Mr. Alford. I admire your niece's beauty, and sparkle, and polish as I would admire the qualities of that diamond on your finger—a beautiful gem, but far beyond my humble means.

Alford [*Looking at ring.*] A fine stone—yes—certainly. Well, Driverton, if my canvass goes well, and I am elected, I will give you this gem the day I am returned.

Quill. Which gem, sir?

Alford. Why, this one, of course.

Quill. Of course. [*Aside.*] Well, a moment since, such a diamond as that seemed to me so unattainable, that I unconsciously used it as a similitude to illustrate my distance from her, and now it is almost within my reach—and she is—[*Sighs heavily.*]

Alford. What's the matter, Driverton?

Quill. Oh, nothing sir. I think I will sit down and draft out that little speech you want for the supper to-morrow night, before I go to bed.

Alford. Do, like a good fellow. I'd like to have it all day to-morrow, so as to be sure I can commit it to memory.

Quill. All right, sir; and then I'll go to bed.

Alford. Well, good-night. You won't be disturbed here; everyone has gone to bed. [*Exit c.*]

Quill. I wish I could get that girl out of my head, or I wish that her uncle had really failed, and her quarter of a million had gone in the smash. But no, that's a selfish wish. She's out of my reach. [*Crossing to window.*] She's out of my reach as hopelessly as that star. I pitched my simile too low when I spoke of the diamond. Yet fancy Quilford Driverton with a five hundred dollar diamond. Could anything have seemed more preposterous yesterday. Yes, just one thing—Quilford Driverton with a two hundred and fifty thousand dollar wife. Well, I haven't had much luck in life, and why should I grumble because a miracle cannot be wrought in my favor in this instance. What a lovely night. [*Looking out of the window.*] Almost a pity to go to bed. What are those people over there under the far fence? They are acting very suspiciously; they'll bear watching, I think. What a lovely moonlight, and what a chance to share it with—Hullo! they're coming across this way. There's something up, decidedly, and I'm just going to find out what it is. [*Blows out lamp; stage darkens.*] Now, I'll keep my weather-eye lifting. [*Door opens, enter MAX.*] Hullo! who's this. [*Gets behind curtains.*]

Max. [*Tipsy.*] Vell, I dinks I fooled dose fellows some. They're fond of diamonds, are they, and they wanted to know vere they vere kept. But I fooled them—ha! ha! They're kept vere you've no chance to see them, says I, in a black locked box in Miss Wolverton's own room. Ha! ha! I guess I vas smart; and then, ven I told them the room vas in the front of the house, off this room, and right under vere Mr. Alford sleeps, they said I vas right, and it vas no goot, and they would go away, and give up hopes of seeing dem shiners at all. [*Yawns.*] Ah—I guess I vill go mit mineself to mine leetle bed. Dat lager in Hexter's is damn strong, and I guess it's stronger than ever at election times. [*Yawns.*] Good-night mit you, Max. Every one is in bed, and I'll go to bed, too.

[*Exit MAX.* He has filled up this speech with business—closing piano, pulling down blinds, and arranging things for the night in a maudlin kind of way.]

Enter burglars, SANDY and BILLY.

Sandy. I tell you we worked that Dutchman to the Queen's taste. This should be the gal's room from his description.

Billy. And the diamonds should be in a black box on the dressing-table. Just slip in and lift 'em out—I'll keep watch here.

Sandy. Show us the glim, then.

[*Takes bull's-eye lantern, and goes off R.*]

Billy. This should be a decent swag, and no risk at all to speak of. Every one is in bed, and we can be in New York before morning.

Quill. [*Aside.*] Well, there's one fellow not in bed that I know of.

Billy. Now then, what can be a keeping of that bloke. [*Enter SANDY, with box.*] Have you got it?

Sandy. Ay, here it is.

Billy. Are you sure it's the right one?

Sandy. Sartin; why, what else should it be?

Billy. Well, I've been fooled by a dummy before now. Better open it and see that is the headlights in earnest.

Sandy. Well, if it's any satisfaction to you.

[*Burglars lay their pistols on table and come down—they kneel down and pry open box.*]

Sandy. Well! how now?

Billy. Lord! ain't them beauties?

[*QUILL meanwhile has edged over to table, and covered them with the pistols.*]

Sandy. Come, let's git. Where's the pistols?

Quill. Here they are!

(*Curtain.*)

For Encore Picture.—FLORENCE screams, inside R. room, says "Robbers—my jewelry is gone," and rushes on L. 3 E. in night-gown and neat little night-cap. She sees men, screams "Oh, a man! a man!" and runs back into room. QUILL catches sight of her, and is in the act of endeavoring to cover the thieves and get a sight at FLOY as curtain descends.

ACT III.

A handsome conservatory in ALFORD'S country house, open at back, disclosing view of Hudson River.

SCENE.—FLOY and MARY ANN discovered.

Floy. I suppose the politicians will be here pretty soon.

Mary Ann. Why, miss, the place is full of them already. They've been arriving all the afternoon.

Floy. No fear of any of them coming this way, fortunately. The banquet-hall has more attraction than the boudoir for the average politician. Uncle Alford is a foe to bribery and corruption; but he sees no harm in giving his political friends a skinfull of good wine, any more than his social friends.

Mary Ann. La, miss, why should he?

Floy. Which is why we may expect to see a goodly gathering of the genus politico. I'm glad of it. I need something to revive my spirits after the fright I had last night.

Mary Ann. O Miss Florence, wasn't it terrible? I wonder you didn't go off into high strikes.

Floy. Oh, I wasn't in any danger till it was all over.

Mary Ann. And was you in danger then, miss?

Floy. I think, perhaps, I was, just a little, and I'm not at all sure that I escaped it.

Mary Ann. Why, miss, you didn't lose nothing—even the little coral heart on your neck ribbon was there, just as you took it off.

Floy. Yes, nobody has stolen my little coral heart. [*Sighs.*] I wonder how the villains got in?

Mary Ann. Lor', miss, it's hard to tell.

Floy. And I wonder where Mr. Driverton is? I haven't seen him—not all day.

Mary Ann. I don't think he have got up to-day at all, miss.

Floy. Good gracious! Can it be possible that he was injured in his struggle with the robbers last night?

Mary Ann. Not at all likely.

Floy. But two against one—reflect, Mary Ann.

Mary Ann. They're a going to drink wine and beer, and have a good time in there. I'll bet Mr. Driverton won't be far off when the corks begin to fly. [*Exit, R.*]

Floy. Mary Ann, you're a materialistic monster! Bah! Why should I care whether he likes wine, or what his faults may be. He's nothing to me—he can be nothing to me: an obscure, penniless Bohemian; and yet, and yet, he is very brave and very agreeable, and very, very clever.

Where genius in musical cadence,
Courts beauties none other can see;
Can the cold outer world woo its maidens
As sweetly as we.

Enter PERCY DURHAM.

Ah, good evening, Mr. Durham. You are come to join our festivities, I hope.

Percy. Well, really, Miss Wolverton, they have taken me a little by surprise. I had come over for a quiet chat with your uncle, when I found preparations for something like a political banquet on foot.

Floy. But now you are here you will stay, of course.

Percy. I should be delighted to, but for two things. The first is, I have walked over in ordinary morning costume, and this is to be a full-dress affair, if ever I saw one.

Floy. Oh, you will do very well—you look quite pretty as you are; or, if you prefer it, you might send over for your clothes.

Percy. I have done so already, Miss Wolverton, or rather, Mr.

Alford kindly sent his servant for me. That is the least of my difficulties.

Floy. Naturally, since it is already overcome; but I'll venture to say the other can be surmounted as easily. What is it?

Percy. It is more serious. I may be required to make a speech!

Floy. Well, make it.

Percy. Oh, but I can't. I never could string three words together in my life, without making some egregious blunder.

Floy. You ought to commit a number of speeches to memory.

Percy. I know I ought, but how many of us do as we ought to in this world? Now, will you cast your eye over this? I selected it from a book in Mr. Alford's room, but I do not know if it will exactly fit the occasion. [*Hands her note book, which she reads.*]

Enter QUILL, clothes much torn and disarranged—comes slowly down.

Quill. A nice pickle that venomous brute of a burglar has reduced me to—he hasn't left a whole stitch in my garments. I have lain in bed all day, hoping to be able to slip into town at dusk, and visit some expeditious snip in the repairing line, but the whole place seems alive with preparations for that political banquet, which, I suppose, I ought to assist at, and which I had clean forgotten. I must slip away somehow, and contrive to make myself decent if I can. [*Comes suddenly on FLOY and PERCY.*] The deuce!

Floy. Oh! How you startled me, Mr. Driverton. I haven't seen you all day, and I have been so longing to thank you for your gallant conduct last night.

Quill [*Uneasy with his garments.*] Don't mention it, I beg.

Percy [*Aside.*] What an extraordinary scare-crow.

Floy. But, good gracious, Mr. Driverton, where have you been? You look all broke up.

Quill. A little bit torn, that's all. I was on my way to effect repairs.

Floy. You got torn with those horrid creatures last night. You can send over to your home for other clothes, though.

Quill. Yes, I can send. [*Aside.*] And that's all the good it would do me.

Floy. And you were hurt, too. You have been in bed all day.

Quill. Not hurt physically—only sartorially.

Floy. And that is easily repaired.

Quill [*Significantly.*] Sometimes.

Percy. Do you know, Mr. Driverton, I have a great favor to ask of you.

Quill. Anything in my power, Mr. Durham.

Percy. I shall probably, nay, almost certainly, Mr. Alford tells me, be called upon to make a few remarks at the committee supper. Now, I know what a ready tongue you have—

Quill [*Deprecatingly.*] Now, Mr. Durham

Percy. Yes, you have. You fooled all Hexter's the other day—

made them believe you were Buffem. 'Pon my word, I never saw anything better done in my life.

Quill. Oh, a trifling jest. I sometimes let off one; indeed, I am obliged to, as a relief to my over-wrought brain.

Percy. Exactly so.

Floy. You had a very narrow escape, Mr. Driverton. The committee were inclined to give you a bath in an adjacent pond.

Quill. Oh, I shouldn't have objected to that.

Floy. Indeed.

Percy. A good swimmer, possibly.

Quill. If there's one thing I know more about than another, it's swimming out when I'm over my head; besides, I've always been a strict cold-water man.

Floy. Really; I never should have taken you for a disciple of Father Mathew.

Quill. Oh, yes, I'm strictly temperate; but last night, for the first time in years, I indulged in the luxury of a night-cap.

Floy [*Impetuously.*] Mr. Driverton, aren't you ashamed?

Quill. Well, perhaps I am, a little bit. But all this is irrelevant. I presume the loan of a night-cap is not the favor Mr. Durham would ask of me.

Percy. No. I was going to say that a little speech, such as I am expected to make, would be nothing to a man of your talents. But I am no orator—

Quill. As Brutus is.

Percy. Exactly. Now will you help me?

Quill [*Producing note-book.*] With pleasure. Now, what do you want to say?

Percy. My dear sir, if I knew that I should not trouble you.

Quill. Well, what do you stand on?

Percy [*Astonished.*] My feet, of course.

Quill. Yes, but on what subject do you wish to speak?

Percy. Oh, something general and non-committal.

Quill. Something in this style, eh? [*Writes.*] "Mr. Chairman and Gentlemen of the Committee: It is with pleasure that I respond to your call."

Floy. That won't be true.

Percy. Never mind, it sounds well. Go on, Mr. Driverton.

Quill. "It is with a feeling of deep and heart-felt satisfaction that I respond to your request, and say a few words in return for the compliment you have paid me. These words shall be few—very few. I am with you, heart and soul, and shall always be happy to labor in season and out of season—

Floy. Especially out of season.

Quill. "For the furtherance of the cause we all love and advocate. With sincere thanks for your kindness, I will therefore say, *Nihil sine labore*, and conclude."

Floy. That's splendid.

Percy. The Latin will be sure to fetch 'em. Now, I'll go and learn it, and—

Floy. Electrify all Hexter's in its delivery. Success attend you.
[Exit PERCY.]

Quill. Is that gentleman married, Miss Wolverton?

Floy. Why do you ask?

Quill. Oh, it would be a relief to my mind, I think, if I knew he were.

Floy. I don't see what possible difference it can make to you.

Quill. Very true; neither do I.

Floy. But, as you say it would relieve your mind, I will tell you. He was married last spring. He married a rich widow. Does he sink very deep in your estimation now that you know his wife had money?

Quill. Oh, a widow is a very different thing.

Floy. Why?

Quill. They manage these things better in Further India.

Floy. Is that where the India ink comes from?

Quill. Yes. I've often seen them make it.

Floy. How is it done?

Quill. Well, the natives select a very dark night, when everything is as black as pitch. They then take a wicker-basket and go out into the jungle, and cut out the blackest slabs they can find of the inky darkness. When the basket is filled, they take it to the gin-mill.

Floy. Gin mill.

Quill. Yes: contraction of *In-gin mill*, where it is compressed under a regular hydrostatic press of about five hundred mule-power, until all the moisture is extracted. This is the celebrated Indian ink of commerce.

Floy. Is this quite the truth, Mr. Driverton?

Quill. Not quite, but as near it as we generally can get during a political campaign.

Floy. I don't believe you know how to tell the truth.

Quill. If there is one thing in this world I do know a little more about than another, it is the truth.

Floy. Theoretically, I suppose.

Quill. And practically. Do you think it is always the best to tell the truth?

Floy. Of course.

Quill. And the whole truth?

Floy. Certainly.

Quill. About night-caps, for instance?

Floy. Mr. Driverton, you are a shocking tease!

Quill. I never saw a night-cap before.

Floy. It is the first time I ever heard you acknowledge that anything was new or strange to you.

Quill. The truth slipped upon me this time; but you will respect my confidence.

Floy. If you will respect my night-cap.

Quill. Respect it? I venerate it above any earthly thing. Do you know it reposes as close to my heart as I can get it.

Floy. What utter nonsense! I wish you'd give it me back!

Quill. Why?

Floy. It spoils the set.

Quill. In that case I had better keep it.

Floy. I mean its absence spoils the set.

Quill. Impossible! In its present position it might spoil the set of my shirt bosom, if the burglars had left any set in it to be spoiled.

Floy. Do you know you acted very courageously last night?

Quill. And so did you. It's not every young lady would have ventured into the presence of three, great, horrid, awful men in a robe de nuit and night-cap.

Floy. Decidedly that night-cap is interfering with your rest.

Quill. And, least it might interfere with yours, I keep it.

Floy. You are very tiresome.

Quill. Why?

Floy. Because you tease so.

Quill. I like to see you pout; it becomes you.

Floy. I shall box your ears directly, and perhaps you may not like that quite so well.

Quill. [*Putting forward his head.*] On the contrary, I shall like it better.

Floy. Then I shan't do it.

Quill. Then it is you who are the tease.

Floy. I thought you started in to tell me something about widows in Further India?

Quill. There are no widows in India.

Floy. No? Don't married men ever die there?

Quill. Constantly; but their widows never survive them. Here's a case that fell under my own observation: the last time I was at Ram Jam Hammer, a little village in the Punjaub, I was lying in my bungalow one afternoon smoking a hookah, and busily engaged in examining the skins of six tigers I had killed that morning, when my servant rushed in, crying excitedly, "mush washee rim ram tom cat bare bone!"

Floy. Dear me, that must have been something terrible!

Quill. It was. He was telling me that the awful ceremony of the Suttee was about to be performed upon a woman who had been so unfortunate as to lose her husband.

Floy. A widow, in short.

Quill. Yes; a widow, for a short, a very short time. Hastily seizing my revolver, and thrusting a bottle of soda water in my pocket, I rushed to the square where the revolting ceremony was to be performed. There was a large crowd assembled around the pile on which the unfortunate was to be burned.

Floy. How terrible.

Quill. A Brahmin was pouring coal oil on the wood, to make it

burn more easily, and a band of musicians were playing on their discordant instruments; for you must know that to the heathen in their blindness, this affair takes the place of picnics with us. Soon the poor woman was led out—I saw it was “Ka-vin-Kali,” which, in the beautiful imagery of the East, means “Hole in the sunset.” As her dark hair played in the evening breeze, and her mild, soft eyes beamed tenderly forth beneath their sweeping lashes, she looked like an Indian Madonna. I caught her eye. She gave me a wink.

Floy. A wink?

Quill. You seem surprised; but you must remember that Oriental eyelids are more prehensible than our own. The priest stepped forward, and placing a ladder against the pile, assisted her to its foot. Again I caught her eye, and again she winked.

Floy. That was twice.

Quill. Exactly. I could no longer remain inactive, but stepping to the victim's side, I said, in a loud voice, “Hold!”

Floy. That's a very short word.

Quill. It is longer in the vernacular of the country. To be more accurate, I said, “Hanna Shrewsbury,” which is their equivalent for our “Hold!” and hold they did, especially the one who held the lady. However, I tore her from his grasp, and as I held her in my arms, she laid her trembling head upon my bosom, murmuring, “With you, Quill, I have no fear; for I know that you are solid.”

Floy. That was strange language for a lady—especially a Hindoo lady to use.

Quill. Well, you see, she had associated a good deal with the American missionaries, and had naturally picked up more or less American slang. A simultaneous rush was made upon me from all sides. Levelling my revolver, I fired into the howling mass, till the ground was piled with corpses and my cartridges were exhausted. My situation was now indeed perilous, but my presence of mind never forsook me. I recollected the soda water bottle—I pulled it from my pocket and pressed the patent cork, which flew out with a loud report, hitting the boss Brahmin in the nose. All fell prostrate to the ground, while cries of “A miracle! a miracle!” resounded on all sides. Taking advantage of their superstitious fears, I hastily mounted an elephant which stood, all ready saddled, near by, and with the lady in my arms, left the scene of what might have been a frightful tragedy.

Floy. And the lady, what became of her?

Quill. She accompanied me to this country, and shortly after her arrival went lecturing.

Floy. Oh, bother! That ruins the romance.

Enter MAX, carrying parcel.

Max. Of you bleese, miss, dot your uncle would like to see you.

Floy [*Going off R.*] Certainly. Excuse me, Mr. Driverton, I shall be back directly.

Max. Of you bleese, boss, did you say sometings about that job in the brinting office?

Quill. Oh, yes. I spoke to Mr. Alford about it, and he saw no objection to your making a trial; so I've spoken to the editor about you. You just take card down to him at the office this evening or to-morrow, and he'll make a devil of you.

Max. Vat is dat tuyvil?

Quill. You'll find out before they get through with you.

Max. Mein Got! did I travel all these ways from the Faderland to be made a tuyvil of.

Quill. Don't you fret; it's a good billet enough.

Max. All right: ven I got to own de paper myself, I don't forgot you.

Quill. Meanwhile, recollect I'm one of your bosses now. What have you got in that parcel?

Max. Dat? Dat's Mr. Durham's dress clothes I've been getting.

Quill. Durham, eh? He's about my size; and he's well enough dressed for all practical purposes, whereas I— [*Looks at his clothes; MAX starts to go.*] Here, Max, I'll attend to that parcel for you.

Max. But don't you got—

Quill. A nice devil you'll make, if you commence by disobeying the very first order you get.

Max. Dot vas so; I vas a nice tuyvil. Here they are, boss; and ven I get to be a big brinter, I won't forget you. [*Exit MAX.*]

Quill. After all, Durham owes me this much for writing his speech for him. It's only a fair exchange. I suited him with a speech, and now it's his turn to suit me. Well, I've been badly used; but I'm going to obtain redress at last, and I hope I'll be better suited presently.

Enter ALFORD.

Alford. Hullo, Driverton. The very man I was looking for. But what's the matter? You're all torn to pieces.

Quill. I'm just about to make a change in my apparel, sir. I met with a little accident.

Alford. A little accident? You look as if you'd been thrown out of a hay-tedder, and slept in a holly bush.

Quill. Exactly what I've done, sir—figuratively. But I'll be more presentable presently.

Alford. But, by the bye, before you go, I haven't been able to see you all day. Have you got that speech?

Quill. Oh, yes, that'll be all right. [*Aside.*] Blest if I haven't forgotten all about it. [*Aloud.*] I'll bring it to you presently.

Alford. But I shall have little enough time to commit it to memory as it is. The committee are beginning to arrive. Cannot you let me have it now?

Quill. Oh—certainly. [*Aside.*] I'm in a dence of a fix.

Alford. It's short, hope?

Quill. That is its chiefest merit.

Alford. Well, let's have it.

Quill [*Producing pocket-book.*] I can say I have lost it. [*Looks*

through pocket-book.] [*Aside.*] By Jove, here's Durham's speech manifolded on the next page. It will do at a pinch. Here you are, sir. Just cast your eye over that.

Alford. Hum, hum. Yes, that will do first rate; but how very faintly your pencil marks—hum, hum. Yes, “*Nihil sine labore.*” I like to wind up with a Latin quotation. I'll just go in and study it up. We'll see you at supper, Mr. Driverton.

Quill. Yes; I have sent for my evening clothes. I'll go and dress, and be with you directly.

Alford. All right; and be prepared, you may have to speak yourself. [*Exit ALFORD.*]

Quill. Yes; now it all depends which of these two—Durham or Alford—gets his little speech off first. The other is apt to be distanced.

Exit QUILL. Enter JOB DRIVERTON, slightly tipsy.

Job. Foresails and flying-jibs, but this is a swell sort of a place. Now, what in thunder can Quill be doing here? Down to his house they told me they never see him now; but that he lives altogether out of town, at the country seat of the candidate from Hexter's. Ah, he's a clever boy is Quill; very, very. But I'd like to know how he tumbled into as snug a berth as this. [*Enter JESSIE.*] Now, there's a slick little craft enough. Maybe that's what Quill's after. Servant, miss?

Jessie. [*Pausing and looking doubtfully at him.*] What do you want?

Job. [*Aside.*] Don't appear to be over-and-above cordial. Mayhap she don't know that she's my daughter-in-law, that's to be, leastways if she is the craft Quill is in chase of.

Jessie. Is there any one you want to see? If so, you should have come to the door and rung the bell.

Job. I never cruises in strange waters without a business, young lady. Just now, my business is to see a young man by the name of Quill Driverton, if any such be here.

Jessie. Do you wish to see Mr. Driverton?

Job. Well, I reckon I do. Why, he's—[*Checking himself*] [*Aside*] Maybe he's doing the swell here, and being my boy wouldn't help him any. [*Aloud.*] Well, miss, he's a kind of a friend of mine; and being as I just got off a cruise, I thought I'd like to see him. So I just ran down to his anchorage, but found he'd slipped his cable and got out. Howsnmdever, miss, a lubber as was quartered there told me I'd find him here. I've been a-waiting about the grounds half the day, in hopes to see him, miss, not wishing to intrude; but I got tired, and just stepped in at a side door, thinking to overhaul him somewhere under hatches, d'ye see? and no offense meant, miss.

Jessie. No offense at all; but I think the best way will be for you to go back and ring the bell, and ask the servant where he is. I have not seen him myself, lately.

Job. All right, and thank you kindly, miss.

[*Exit JOB.*]

Jessie. What a strange old man! and he looks as if he had been drinking. I wonder what can be his business with Mr. Driverton. But to be sure, gentlemen in public life must be brought in contact with all kinds of strange people.

Percy [*Entering.*] Oh, Miss Crayton, do you happen to have seen Max anywhere? [*Enter MAX.*] Ah, here he is. Did you get those clothes, Max?

Max. Dose glothes?

Percy. Yes, my evening clothes, that I sent you after.

Max [*Aside.*] Dot vas the most unfortunatest ding could have happened. I don't know vat to say—vere's my new boss? He could lie out of a shuit of glothes in van minute.

Percy. Well, why don't you answer? Where are my clothes?

Max. Oh, dose glothes?

Percy. Certainly.

Max. Maybe you not got dem.

Percy. If I had I shouldn't be asking for them.

Max. Dot vas very strange.

Percy. How so? Where are they?

Max. I brought dose glothes here.

Jessie. Well, where are they now? Don't be so mysterious, Max.

Max. I give dose glothes to the servant girl to bring to his room.

Percy. Ah; then I suppose they are there now.

Enter MARY ANN.

Max. Tousand tuyvils! Coming, boss. [*Exit hurriedly.*]

Jessie. Which is Mr. Durham's room, Mary Ann?

Mary Ann. I dunno, miss.

Percy. Which room did you leave the clothes in?

Mary Ann. What clothes?

Jessie. Didn't you bring a parcel up-stairs just now?

Mary Ann. No, miss

Jessie. This is very strange! Mary Ann, go and find Max and get those things between you.

Percy. I'll go with he. This is really very mysterious.

[*Exit PERCY and MARY ANN.*]

Jessie. I do hope there is nothing wrong about Mr. Durham's clothes. He is just the kind of man to be thrown into a galloping consumption by any solecism in his wardrobe.

Enter ALFORD.

Alford. What, Jessie, all alone?

Jessie. Even so, and I certainly didn't expect the pleasure of your company. How about the banquet?

Alford. Oh, every one has not arrived yet! And, to tell you the truth, I am not sorry to have a few minutes to myself before I am called on to play the host. I am out of spirits this evening.

Jessie. Yet I am sure your chances never looked brighter.

Alford. I am not thinking of my chances just now, Jessie. This is a sad anniversary for me, you know.

Jessie. I know it, dear, and I feel for you.

Alford. It is twenty-three years to-day since the *America* was lost, and the memory of that fearful scene is as vivid in my mind as if it only occurred yesterday. I can see the horror-stricken crowd of passengers swamping the boats, their only chance of safety, in their panic haste to quit the sinking ship. I can feel my own helplessness—the hopelessly “lost” feeling that overtook me, as my wife clung to me, and implored me to save our child. But, what could I do?

Jessie. Nothing, indeed! You did the best you could when you intrusted their lives to the brave sailor who came to your assistance.

Alford. And who, doubtless, perished with them. I suppose it is beyond the bounds of possibility that any of them were saved.

Jessie. I would not dwell upon this, Mr. Alford.

Alford. I recur to it in words (it is never far absent from my thoughts) only that I may explain what may seem unfeeling in my treatment of you and Sylvester. It had always been a dream of my poor sister, Mrs. Wolverton, and myself that our children should marry. Death took my elder niece, Mary Wolverton—the cruel sea swallowed up my son, Lionel Alford. But as Sylvester has taken Lionel’s place, and as Floy is left an only child, they *must* marry. I must keep my word to my sister. I cannot bear to disappoint so darling a wish of my own.

Jessie. I understand, Mr. Alford, and trust me, I shall never make so poor a return for your generous kindness, as to disappoint you. Sylvester you adopted to fill the place of the boy you had lost, but nothing but the most generous kindness induced you to extend the shelter of your roof to me—the helpless, friendless orphan. I owe it to you that I have education, friends, a place in the world; and far be it from me to requite your kindness by thwarting your plans. I shall never marry, Mr. Alford.

Alford. Oh, don’t say that, Jessie, or you will make me feel very criminal! I would like to see you happily married.

Jessie. Well, it is a purposeless discussion. I do not know that I am very anxious to marry, and—

Enter MAX.

Max. Col. Smithers and dose other gentlemen mit the committee are come.

Alford. All right, I’m coming. [*Exit MAX.*] Now Jessie, dear, you do not think I am hard and unreasonable, do you?

Jessie. I think you are my best and kindest friend, Mr. Alford.

Alford. Thank you, dear, for saying that; indeed I wish to be. Now good-bye for the present.

[*Kisses JESSIE and exit R. JESSIE turns and walks slowly L.*]

Enter SYLVESTER, L.

Syl. You were just talking to Mr. Alford, Jessie?

Jessie. Yes.

Syl. Is he so obstinately set against our union? Is there no hope of his relenting?

Jessie. We can never be anything more to each other than we are at present, Sylvester.

Syl. And that is nothing.

Jessie. Oh, yes, a great deal. Very dear friends—brother and sister, if you will.

Syl. I hate these platonic relationships. Jessie, you will not let this old man's obstinacy mar the happiness of our lives.

Jessie. We will find truer happiness yet, in doing our duty, Syl.

Syl. It is not our duty to sacrifice ourselves to silly, worldly prejudices.

Jessie. Is gratitude a prejudice, Syl?—and we both owe him gratitude.

Syl. We do; worse luck.

Jessie. Come, come, Syl, don't be a child. You are very young, and—

Syl. And I've all the longer life to miss you in.

[*They pass off L. arm-in-arm.*]

Enter MARY ANN, running on and looking back.

Mary Ann. Law, but didn't he give me a scare. I hope the master won't see him around, that's all.

Enter FLOY.

Floy. Why, what's the matter, Mary Ann?

Mary Ann. A sailor man, miss; he's all around the place, and just as drunk as he can be.

Floy. A sailor? Why, what brought him here?

Mary Ann. I don't know, miss. He wants to see Mr. Driverton, he says.

Floy. To see Mr. Driverton! That's very odd. And he's tipsy, you say?

Mary Ann. Just intossified, miss—he's very drunk.

Floy. Well, he'd better come when he's sober, if he wants to see anybody. Tell Max to try and get him out of the place quietly, without any noise or scandal, before my uncle sees him.

Mary Ann. Yes, miss.

[*Exit.*]

Floy. A tipsy sailor; now, what can he want with Mr. Driverton? I'm sure he's too much of a gentleman to have anything to do with people of that kind. No doubt, he'd only be annoyed if he were to see him. I hope they won't meet, though that isn't likely, for I suppose the gentlemen have set down to supper by this time.

Enter QUILL, dressed in evening suit, and wears a badge or decoration.

Why, Mr. Driverton, I didn't know you for a moment. I thought you had set down to supper by this time.

Quill. Oh, I'm time enough. They're transacting some committee business before they sit down, and they look upon me as an interloper. They distrust my political powers, I believe; but I have no doubt my performance at the supper-table will convert them.

Floy. What a pretty decoration! I never saw this before.

Quill. I rarely wear it. The fact is, I obtained it on what might almost be regarded as false pretensions, and I am a little bit ashamed of it.

Floy. It is very pretty. Might I ask the circumstances under which it was conferred.

Quill. Certainly. They are a little peculiar, but I cannot altogether blame myself. I acted for the best.

Floy. Now, you are trifling with my curiosity.

Quill. Well, some years ago, I, with several others, was sent as a missionary to New Zealand.

Floy. A missionary? I did not know you were a minister.

Quill. If there is one thing in this world I pride myself upon more than another, it is my strict orthodoxy. I am a duly qualified minister in a vast number of various religious sects.

Floy. That speaks well for your orthodoxy. However, go on.

Quill. There was one especially powerful Maori chief, whom we were all very anxious to convert, for he was an influential man, and withal a whole-souled, noble fellow. He was readily enough persuaded to receive baptism, but he had seventeen wives, and these he would not surrender.

Floy. Poor benighted man!

Quill. Rather. However, some considerable time afterwards, when he had returned to his tribe, I received a letter from him—

Floy. Oh, the Maoris write, then?

Quill. Remarkably gracefully. In his letter he said that my exhortations had produced such an effect upon his mind that he had become converted. He added that he would be at the mission in the course of a few days with the girl of his heart, whom he desired to marry according to our ritual, and live a married life, with a single helpmate, like a Christian.

Floy. How gratifying to find your teaching had not been thrown away.

Quill. Was it not? I showed the letter in triumph at the mission, and was forthwith rewarded with this decoration in acknowledgment of my important success.

Floy. But you say you obtained it almost by false pretenses. Did the chief change his mind?

Quill. On the contrary, he presented himself at the mission within three days, with a lovely Maori maiden, to whom he was united,

according to the marriage service set down in the book of Common Prayer.

Floy. Well?

Quill. At the conclusion of the ceremony, the officiating minister congratulated him on his changed mind, and asked, incidentally, what had become of the seventeen wives he had when he was there before.

Floy. Just what I was wondering.

Quill. He replied, with the utmost nonchalance: "Oh, me good Christian; only one wife; oder seventeen, me eat 'em."

Floy. Oh, the horror!

Quill. And that's how I got my decoration.

Floy. I wonder you ever wear it. Now, if you had been a Maori, Mr. Driverton, do you suppose you could have eaten your wife?

Quill. If I were married to the girl of my heart, I think I should feel like eating her up.

Floy. Oh, you speak figuratively. But is there a girl of your heart, Mr. Driverton?

Quill. What romancist was ever without one?

Floy. But is she purely ideal?

Quill. She was until quite recently. But within the last week or so she has become clothed with the fairest flesh, decked with the softest tresses, lighted up by the brightest eyes, from whose soft depths the sweetest, purest soul is forever looking out at me.

Floy. How nice she must be. And do you admire your real as much as your ideal?

Quill. There can be no comparison between them. My ideal was my own handiwork—my real is my God's.

Floy [*Softly.*] And you love her, then?

Quill. More—a thousand times more than I shall ever dare to tell her.

Floy. But you have never told her?

Quill. It is not only by the lips that affection finds utterance.

Floy. But maiden modesty may not respond to affection, save when it finds utterance by the lips.

Quill. Oh, Miss Wolverton, why will you tempt me thus? Is not the path of duty hard enough and rugged enough without your increasing its difficulties?

Floy. I would not willingly add a feather weight to any burden you have to bear. I would rather help you to carry it.

Quill. I must bear it alone. In a few days my duties with your uncle will be ended, and I will sink back into the rusty chains, a slave of the wearisome pen again. Then my life will separate from yours like the bitter, turbid waters, that cannot mingle with the sweet and gentle stream, by whose side chance has permitted it to flow for a space. But, believe me, Miss Wolverton, my life will be the better for the contact ever after.

Floy. [*Almost weeping.*] And the world and its duties will claim you again, and you will forget me.

Quill. Forget thee! if to dream by night, and think of thee by day,
If all the homage deep and wild, a poet's heart can pay,
If prayers, in absence breath'd for thee, to heaven's protecting power,
If winged thoughts that flit to thee, ten thousand in an hour,
If busy fancy, blending thee with all my future lot,
If this thou call'st forgetting—then, indeed, thou art forgot!

[*Bends over her, and takes her hand.*]

Enter ALFORD.

Alford. Hallo, Quill! come in; we're all at supper, and I want you to mix the salad if you know how!

Quill [*Low and rapidly.*] Good-bye! I dare not say I love, but there is no sin in worshipping one of heaven's angels. [*Aloud.*] If I know how—if there is one thing in this world I do know a little more about than another it is dressing salad.

[*Exit with ALFORD.*]

Jessie [*Entering.*] Why, Floy, in tears! What is the matter?

Floy. Oh, Jessie! Jessie! I am very miserable! Why are girls born with hearts at all?

Jessie [*Sighing.*] Why, indeed, Floy!

Floy. Jessie, are you fond of poetry?

Jessie. Some poetry, yes.

Floy. Ah, you speak coldly! But you have never heard Mr. Driverton repeat it.

Jessie. Has he been repeating poetry to you?

Floy. A little, yes.

Jessie. I don't know that that was very prudent.

Floy. Nor do I; but I know that it was very, very delightful.
Hark! [*Voices and laughter from next room.*]

Jessie. The gentlemen are evidently enjoying themselves.

Floy. I can hear his voice. Now is it possible that he can be laughing and chattering in there, and he left me so subdued, so sorrowful?

Jessie. There are smiles we put on just to cover our tears.

Floy. So there are. Thank you, Jessie, for reminding me of that.

Jessie. I'm not sure that I should have reminded you. You must not think too much of this Mr. Driverton, Florence.

Floy. I know it. What do you think of these extraordinary stories he tells?

Jessie. I think they are the one objectionable feature in a character which, otherwise, I like very much.

Floy. I think they are very amusing. He doesn't mean them to be believed, of course.

Jessie. He tells them with a remarkably straight face.

Floy. Hush! Here come the gentlemen.

Enter the party from dinner, ALFORD leading, and MAX and MARY ANN following with coffee, etc.

Alford. Now, gentlemen, by taking our coffee here, we can enjoy the river while we drink it.

Smithers. And the society of these ladies, I hope.

Floy. Oh, certainly!

Alford. I will remark, Driverton, that your salad was a marked success.

Quill. You need never be afraid of eating salad of my concoction. Unlike other salads, it is perfectly easy of digestion. The late Admiral Farragut, during his latter years, was a martyr of dyspepsia, and was actually able to take nothing but the salad I mixed for him. His last words were—you know how patriotic he was—"Tell Driverton to publish his salad receipt for the benefit of the Union."

Durham. Very singular.

Alford. Oh, yes! Driverton says there is nothing in the world he knows more about than salad.

Quill. Except one thing—running a newspaper.

Smithers. You, doubtless, have original ideas in that, sir.

Quill. Well, I flatter myself I have, and if ever I start the paper which is the dream of my life—

Alford. I suppose, "The Utopia," you were telling about.

Quill. That was merely a fanciful name, given to illustrate the beatific condition of mankind it would bring about. I should call it the "Vox Populi"—for what, gentlemen, is the true mission of the press?—to give voice to the sentiments of the million. What do you care, or I care, or any man care for the individual opinions of an editor. Who is he? He may be brilliant, or the reverse; at best, he is but a single brain. The mighty heart of the nation, throbbing with the life-blood of fifty million people, is the fecund birth-place of the sentiments, for which my paper shall be the mouth-piece. The world is ready for such an ally—an ally which shall never leave foe in victory, or friend in need; a fearless champion of the weak, a scathing whip of scorpions to lash corruption from high places—it shall support the feeble, and curb the powerful; it shall stretch forth a helping hand to struggling genius, and pile Pelion on Ossa as a weight to smother vice, and as a stepping-stone for merit to reach the highest places.

Floy [*Who has been excitedly interested.*] Bravo! isn't he eloquent when his enthusiasm is aroused?

Mary Ann. Enthusiasm do ye call it? Faith, it's your uncle's French brandy that's talking now.

Quill. Thank you, Miss Wolverton, I know that what I propose is

a crusade, and a crusade in the nineteenth century means a revolution; and it is very sweet to feel that one is supported by the glances of such eyes as yours, when one is buckling on the sword to do battle against the Saracens of sloth and patronage, and cross folly for the Holy City of the right and the beautiful.

Durham. I wish I had his eloquence.

Smithers. And, if I might suggest, in no wise wishing to interrupt the current of this gentleman's plans, in which I am much interested, I would propose that Mr. Driverton's ready forensic ability be put to practical use in the business of the evening. In short, that he gives us a start in the purpose for which we are assembled here.

Quill. With pleasure. Gentlemen, I have the honor of presenting to you this evening the name of one who is endeared to all of you by his virtues, his many acts of kindness and his unblemished life. Upon the roll of nature's nobility, there is no prouder name than Potter Alford.

[*Applause.*]

Percy [*Whispers to QUILL.*] Say, where did you get my dress suit?

Quill. This, my dear fellow, this is my wedding-suit—had it five years.

Percy. I tell you it's mine. There's my Mozart Club badge, too.

Quill. [*Aside.*] I wondered what that badge was. [*Aloud.*] Sorry to see you are excited so much, Mr. Durham, and you'll be called on to speak presently. Shocking bad example—what's that paper?

Percy. It's the speech you gave me. I'm committing it. But—

Quill. Well, commit it, but don't interrupt me.

Voices. Sit down! Order! Go on, Mr. Driverton—speech, speech.

Quill. Gentlemen, it is the proudest privilege of my life to call this noble character my friend. My friend, my early friend, gentlemen, with all that name imports. We are like David and Jonathan. As boys we played together; fell into the same pond; tumbled from the same tree, robbed the same bird's nest, sucked the same egg. When we grew older, we both fell in love with the same girl; and one of the most elevating recollections of my childhood is the fight we had behind the old school-house, on account of that same girl. Together we grew to manhood, and I watched his character develop into the perfect man. Gentlemen, I am proud of my friend, Mr. Potter Alford.

[*Applause and cries of "ALFORD."*]

Alford. Mr. Chairman and gentlemen of the Committee, it is with pleasure that I respond to your call. It is with a feeling of deep and heartfelt satisfaction that I respond to your request to say a few words in return for the compliment you have paid me. These words shall be few—very few. I am with you, heart and soul, and shall always be happy to labor in season and out of season for the success of the cause we all love and advocate. With my sincere thanks for your kindness, I will say, "*Nihil sine labore,*" and conclude.

[*Sits down amid applause.*]

[*As ALFORD delivers his address, PERCY regards him with horror, occasionally comparing speech with paper he holds. His anguish culminates as ALFORD concludes.*]

Quill. Now, gentlemen, let me prepare you for the oratorical features of the evening. Let me introduce to you Mr. Percy Durham, the silver-tongued orator of New York. He is anxious to address you on the issues of the day.

[*Cries of DURHAM.* PERCY rises very reluctantly.]

Percy. Oh, not at all. Oh, please, no.

Quill. Silence! Hush!

Percy. "Chairman and Ladies of the Committee: Profound satisfaction—feeling—your call—great heavens, I am going to faint. There is a great deal—gentlemen—I can't say any more. Excuse me, I don't feel well."

[*Leaves his place and makes for the door.*]

Quill. Here! Hold hard! Come back!

[*Exit PERCY.*]

Alford. Oh, bring him back, Driverton, if you can.

Quill [*Starting after him.*] If I can. If there is one thing in this world I do know a little more—

[*Exit.*]

Smithers. A brilliant young fellow, that.

Alford. An invaluable man in a campaign like this.

Floy [*Low to Jessie.*] I like to hear them talk so.

Enter JOB, very tipsy.

Jessie. Oh, there's that sailor again. I thought he'd gone.

Max. No; he was around by the stable mit the shentlemen's servants, and he's been trinking—oh, he's been trinking like nothings, miss.

Job. Well, now, mayn't a free and enlightened American citizen get choke full once in a while if he feels like it, especially when he's come ashore after a long voyage?

Max. Come, you clear out of here mit yourself.

Job. Where's Quill—Quill Driverton?

Floy. Oh, what can this disreputable old man want with Mr. Driverton?

Alford [*Looking up, and noticing JOB for the first time.*] What's all this disturbance? A drunken sailor! Why don't you turn him out, Max?

Max. It was not so easy, boss. Now, come along mit yourself.

[*Takes JOB and tries to get him out.*]

Enter QUILL, dragging in PERCY.

Quill. Here's the distinguished orator come back to finish his speech.

Job. Ain't I got no friend here? Where's Quill?

Quill [*Takes in situation.*] Why! [*Comes forward and takes JOB by the arm.*] Ladies and gentlemen, pray accept my apology for this unseemly intrusion. [*To JOB.*] Come along; I'll see you home.

Floy. Oh, who is this, Mr. Driverton?

Quill. He is my father, Miss Wolverton. Come, father.

(*Picture.*)

(*Curtain.*)

ACT IV.

SCENE I.—*Editorial rooms of the "Thunderbolt."* QUILL *discovered seated at desk.* JOB *stands by him.*

Job. But if a fellow does get three sheets in the wind, the first day ashore after a long cruise—

Quill. He's not to blame, I know, dad. What I'm sorry for in this case is that you should have shown up around that place while you were not yourself.

Job. Well, Quill, my first idea was to find you, if you was above hatches at all, the minute I stepped ashore, and I wasn't so lousy when I got there. They filled me up, them lubbers did, with what they called dry wine, and set me singing and cutting up monkey shines, and it didn't mix well with the sound, old, honest rum I had stowed away already.

Quill. I know, dad; I am far from blaming you. I should be an ungrateful son indeed, if I couldn't pass over an occasional peccadillo like that without remark.

Job. I feels badly about it myself, Quill, I does indeed. Why didn't you cut me—say I was a tramp, and kick me out?

Quill. I should be so likely to do that.

Job. Well, I don't suppose I'd have liked it either, and if you'd a done it I suppose I'd have felt sore about it; only just now it seems to be just what I deserved. I'm afraid I've done you no good with them swell folks with my capers, Quill.

Quill. [*Low.*] I'm afraid not, indeed. What must Floy have thought of me. [*Aloud.*] Oh, never mind about them, Job; Alford's either elected or rejected by this time, and, in any case, my connection with him and [*sighing*] has come to an end.

Job. What did you say his name was?

Quill. Alford! I'll take you down with me in the course of the day, and you will explain how it happened. He's not half a bad old chap, and he'll make every allowance.

Job. Sartinly, in course. Anything, Quill. And so his name is Alford; that's a rum start.

Quill. Why, what do you know about any Alford?

Job. Oh, I knew a man by that name many a year ago, but 'tain't likely it's the same. It's a queer story, Quill, and one you've a right to know, and I'll tell it you some day. What did you say his Christian name was?

Quill. I didn't say what it was—but it is Potter.

Job. Potter Alford? Now if—but 'tain't possible!

Quill. What ain't possible?

Job. Well, it ain't possible for you to waste your whole morning on me when you've your paper to write. So you'll find me at home, and when you're through we'll walk down together, and I'll present my respectful 'pologies to Mr. Alford. Good-bye, my boy.

Quill. Good-bye, dad. [*Exit JOB.*] He's right; I have not any time to waste with anything, if I want to give a good account of myself; especially to-day, when I'm in charge. I'd like to turn out a rousing good paper in the editor's absence. Oh, Floy! Floy! I can't see anything but your eyes! How can I write with you smiling up at me from my desk! The lines are dazzled from their place, and ordered words asunder fly. And they must be short of copy.

Enter MAX.

Max. Gopy!

Quill. Hello, Duthey! Well, how do you like being a newspaper man?

Max. [*Scratching his head.*] Vell, I guess I can stand zwei or drei days more. Vy does everybody knock me round like as if I vas a base-ball?

Quill. Oh, it's a custom of the country; a trick of the trade. You'll get used to that. What are all those black marks on your face?

Max. Vell, I vas up-stairs dere, leaning by the counter, watching a feller put de little dings in de box, ven de foreman comes along, and he says—"Here, you fat Dutchman, vat for you make dot pie?" I said, "You dinks dot vas a bakery. I never made a pie in mine life." "Oh, you vas a liar, am I," said he, and mit dot he wipes me along de face mit his black hand, till I fell on de floor on de oder side mit the room.

Quill. Oh, that's only a playful little way foremen have. You mustn't mind that. They haven't chucked you out the window yet, have they?

Max. I dink not. But dey have been making it so lively for me all around, dot I don't recommember if I was chucked out of de window or not.

Quill. When they run you through the Hoe Cylinder Press, and fold you up as flat as a newspaper, you'll remember that.

Max. Mein Gott! Ish dot so?

Quill. Ya, dot's so, if you've got any memory at all. So I suppose, as you've survived thus far, your constitution is pretty good.

Max. My vot?

Quill. Your constitution. Is your health pretty good?

Max. Oh, yaw.

Quill. Did your father die young?

Max. Oh, nein. Mein fader ain't dead. He vorks down by the gas house. He's about 75 years old.

Quill. Oh, well, you may live through.

Max. Vat's dot? May live drue vat?

Quill. Only about one in ten of the boys live through, you know. Those that do become editors. You know why they call them editors?

Max. Nein.

Quill. Hasn't the editor given you a clip in the ear yet?

Max. Oh, yaw, several.

Quill. That's what they are, head-hitters—editors for short. You may be head-hitter of this paper in about fifteen years, if you survive; and even if you don't, this paper is very considerate to the boys that die in its service. We have over a dozen in Greenwood Cemetery now—all in a row, with their names on a board, so their friends can find them easy. If they live through the first week, we always give them a line of obituary poetry—imported from Philadelphia at immense expense. Something like this, you know:

He was such a little seraph,
That his father, who was sheriff,
Was bound to make him wise and great, and sent him here accordin'.
But he quickly found his level,
Like every printer's devil,
And his body crossed East River, and his soul went over Jordan.

Max. Vell, dot vas nice.

Quill. Tommy died the morning of the sixth day, so we gave him six lines. If they only live two days, we sell the bodies to the medical college around the corner here.

Max. Vell, vat vos I doing all dis time dey vas gilling me.

Quill. Oh, dying, mostly.

Max. Vell, I'll die game, and don't you forget it.

Quill. Oh, you're on your muscle a little, are you?

Max. Vell, I have about drei fights a day mit my band ven we play, and I glean them out every time.

Quill. That's a fine band of yours, Max.

Max. I bed you. Ve're going to blay at Manhaddan Beach next summer. I've got a man vat can blay the glarionet all around Levy. You dink I can get up a little collection mit de boys here?

Quill. A collection? What for?

Max. Vell, you see, last week ve vent to blay at an Irish bic-nic, and ve got into a row, and I gleaned out de whole bic-nic mit my trombone, und dot trombone vas a leetle flat since, und I vant to get another.

Quill. How much will it cost?

Max. Vell, I guess I get a left-handed van down by de Bowery for about four dollars.

Quill. All right. Here's half a dollar as a starter. [*Voice off R.*] Where's that Dutch devil with that copy?

Max [*Rushing off.*] Here's vere I go out by de vinder.

[*Exit R. U. E.*]

Enter young swell STUDENT, smoking cigarette, twirling cane, etc.

Student. Editor in?

Quill. What can I do for you?

Student. You, the editor? Au, well, I'm a sophomore—Harvard,

you understand; got a little leisure on my hands—vacation, you know.

Quill. I understand. You wish to know if we want an editor for a month or two.

Student. Exactly.

Quill. I'm glad you came in. We are just pining for an editor. The paper is going to the demnition bow-wows for want of just such a man as you. You never edited a paper, of course?

Student. Never.

Quill. Excellent. You are just the man we want. New blood, you know. Have you ever written for print?

Student. Never.

Quill. Better and better. You won't be hampered by any old foggy ideas about running a paper. You'll just sail right in your own way. You have strong conviction, I hope, politically, socially, morally, mentally, physically and æsthetically.

Student. Yes, sir—particularly æsthetically.

Quill. Oh, you'll do. We would pay a man like you any salary. We are just lost for want of such a head to our concern. How would twelve thousand a year strike you?

Student. I think it is a very fair offer.

Max. [*Entering.*] Gopy!

[*QUILL talks aside to MAX, indicating STUDENT, who has coolly seated himself at desk. QUILL takes coat and hat from hook and hands them to MAX, who goes out.*]

Quill. Make yourself quite at home. Put your feet on the desk and spit in the waste paper basket. You can look over those letters and telegrams there, or dash off an editorial on the European complications, if you feel in the vein. I generally take a smile to brighten my thoughts before I write. [*Shows bottle.*] There's some fine old crow whisky, if you care to try it. Don't be bashful.

[*Sits at other desk. STUDENT takes a pull at bottle.*]

Student. [*Spitting it out.*] Mucilage!

Enter MAX, coat and hat on, newspaper in hand.

Max. Vere is he? Vere was dot man vot brinds dis paper?

Quill. [*Pointing to STUDENT.*] That gentleman is the editor, sir.

Max. [*Attacking him.*] Look here! Vot you mean by dot lie—dot I sell lager bier on Sunday vidout a license?

Student. See here, my good fellow, you're liable to—

Max. Oh, ho! You vas a liar, am I? Dot settles that.

[*Knocks his hat over his eyes, bounces him round, and throws him out.*]

Quill. Bully for you, Dutcheys. We'll have you a head-hitter in a month.

Voice. [*Off R.*] Copy.

[*QUILL cuts strip from newspaper and hands it to MAX.*]

Max. [*Looking at both sides.*] Hold on, I got knocked down stairs

voince for giving them gopy mit both sides written. Vich side of dis goes in?

Quill. [*Looking at slip.*] Poem, "Spring has come again." [*Turning it.*] "Ingersoll on hell." Tell 'em to set up both sides. The man that gets through that poem on spring will be ready for the other. [*Exit MAX R. U. E.*] I'm fearfully behindhand; but if I'm not disturbed I guess I shall be able to catch up. [*Writes rapidly.*]

Enter BELLAMY BROWN. He walks lame, and leans on a heavy stick.

Brown. Anybody in?

Quill. Use your eyes.

Brown. Oh, I mean anybody of any account!

Quill. Well, yes, sir. I'm running this room for the present, and I'm the most exalted personage you're likely to see. Anything I can do for you?

Brown. I'm from New Jersey.

Quill. [*Low*] Good thing for Jersey that he's from it, not in it. [*Aloud.*] Glad to hear it, sir.

Brown. Yes, sir, I'm from New Jersey, and I mean business.

Quill. Well, you've come to the right shop for it. We're all business here, and we can waltz you through livelier than a buzz-saw can go through a butternut log. What's your business?

Brown. [*Producing paper.*] Do you know anything about this here article?

Quill. [*Looking at it.*] Do I know anything about it? Well, sir, if there's one item in that paper I do know a little more about than another, it is that identical one. Why, sir, I wrote that article.

Brown. Oh, you wrote it! Well, I want a retraction. I'm from Jersey.

Quill. Well, go to Jersey. You can't get any retraction here. It's all true.

Brown. What, this is true—"Major Bellamy Brown, who has had the presumption to criticise the course adopted by Peter Cooper in the administration of this great charity, is celebrated as the meanest man in Hoboken. He is correctly reported to have skinned fleas for the sake of the hide and tallow, and his temper is so notoriously bad that even his mother-in-law cannot live with him."

Quill. Oh, that's merely business. We're running a political campaign now, and everything is fair at such a time. But I've fixed you up all right in your obituary.

Brown. My obituary, sir! D——n it, sir, do I look like a corpse?

Quill. Not altogether. But I wrote it up last month when you had the second stroke of paralysis. I knew the next one would fetch you.

Brown. [*Flourishing his cane.*] I'll show you that I'm the liveliest corpse you ever encountered. I'll cane you, sir, within an inch of your life.

Quill. [*Producing club and imitating him.*] I'm sorry to say you'll

have to call again, sir. The editor we keep to be caned is just now sitting up with a sick mother-in-law.

Brown. [*Backing to door.*] Good-morning, sir.

Quill. Almost any other morning, sir. Good-morning. [*Exit BROWN.*] Well, at this rate my morning will not be remarkable for results.

Enter SMYTHE.

My gracious, here's another. What can I do for you, sir?

Smythe. Well, sir, my name is Smythe—S-m-y-t-h-e.

Quill. I've heard the name before; it sounds quite familiar to me.

Smythe. Doubtless, sir; my name—the name of Colonel Delaney Smythe—has had a far-reaching sound in politics.

Quill. Was it to tell me this you came here, sir?

Smythe. No: you are aware I'm running for the legislature. Now, sir, without wishing to dictate your course to you, would you prefer to be obliged the day after election to regret and deplore and so forth, and to invent reasons to account for the defeat of your candidate; or to fly the American Eagle and shake all the stars and stripes into type to exult in your success at bringing your candidate out at the head of the polls?

Quill. The latter, I confess.

Smythe. Well, sir, for that very reason, you had better swing around and come straight into line with my supporters. We'll pass over all the silly and mendacious falsehoods you have printed about me.

Quill. You are too kind.

Smythe. I am strong enough to be magnanimous.

Quill. My dear sir, you had better continue to do your own blowing. You seem quite competent, and rest assured that none of it will ever be done in this office. You run for the assembly—you're not even fit to be an alderman. They do nothing but sit in cushioned chairs and vote yea or nay as the boss may direct, and waste considerable stationery, in the endeavor to save the price of a package of envelopes while they wink very complacently at a million dollar job. No sir. We are taxed to death; our industries groan under the burden of an oppressive government machine, our widows and orphans starve for it, and nothing but an excessive wealth, astounding prosperity and absurd generosity prevents the people of this great nation from taking the matter into our own hands and settling the whole business, as satisfactorily and summarily as the people of San Francisco did so many years ago.

Smythe. Do you refer to the vigilance committee, sir.

Quill. That was my meaning, sir; delicately disguised that I might not lacerate your feelings.

Smythe. A vigilance committee would be a disagreeable contingency.

Quill. No doubt; but the body politic is like the body human, and needs a strong purgative occasionally. The people are gradually

awakening to a sense of their culpable negligence and stupidity in such matters, and the day is not far distant when brains will be a *sine qua non* for nomination and honesty for election, when no man will be allowed to vote till he can at least write his own name, and read the name he is voting for. The independent press shall lead the van in this new movement, and it will take its tone from a paper such as America has never yet heard of; from the *Vox Populi*, sir; an organ which shall scatter incapacity and annihilate crime, and go far, with the aid of providence and this little instrument, to restore the golden age in this misgoverned land.

Smythe. Silence, sir.

Quill. Not much. That is the cry of the blatant rowdies who monopolize our offices and tyrannize over our primaries. Silence and darkness they cry, and they shut out the light of heaven from the politics which their presence renders loathsome.

Smythe. By heavens, sir! men have been shot for less than this.

Quill. But not by men like you. I know you, and your name floats on the surface of the cesspool of politics, to borrow from an editorial—a poor thing, sir, but mine own, already in type for the *Vox Populi*.

Smythe. But which you will never live to publish. [*Draws pistol.*]

Quill [*Sticking pistol in his face.*] Clear out. The editor we keep for getting shot has stepped out to deliver the funeral oration over the body of your candidate for Coroner, whom we killed here yesterday. You had better go and hear what he says.

[*Backs SMYTHE out of the door at the point of the pistol. As he returns meets female book-agent entering.*]

Book fiend. I am just in time, sir, I see to sell you a very valuable little work on target practice. You will find it handy in this office.

Quill. My dear lady, we're all thoroughly practical here, we don't go a cent on theory.

Agent. But this contains the whole theory and practice of projectiles.

Quill. [*Tapping pistol.*] So does this.

Agent. Well, you want a copy of the revised New Testament.

Quill. Sorry to contradict a lady, but I don't.

Agent. You want something, don't you?

Quill. Yes; I want to be let alone.

Agent. Better have this Testament. Every reliable paper quotes Scripture nowadays, and you may as well be in a position to do it correctly.

Quill. We've got a revised New Testament.

Agent. Read it?

Quill. Certainly.

Agent. Any revision or alteration of the story of Ananias and Sapphira?

Quill. I didn't notice. I think not.

Agent. Ah, that's a pity! Decidedly, you newspaper men have great courage to pursue your avocations with that terrible warning always before you—

Quill. Madam, I am physically incapable of distorting the truth ever so little from its rectitude—I am like George Washington.

Agent. I see the likeness. Now, can't I sell you a picture of the father of his country with fac-simile signature, only twenty-five cents.

Quill. With all my respect for George Washington—were full length portraits of him selling at seven cents a thousand, I could not buy a chromo.

Agent. No money—that's bad. I think I'll say good-morning.

Quill. Please do, I'm very busy.

Agent. Good-morning.

Quill. Same to you and many of them [*pause.*] Well, why don't you go.

Agent. If you won't have a Testament—

Quill. If you were selling it at half a cent a copy, I tell you I haven't money enough to purchase a single text. [*Aside.*] She won't go while I'm here, that's plain. I'll go into the next room and give her a chance to clear. [*Goes toward R.*

Agent. These portraits—

Quill. Another time, madam. Friday is salary day. [*Exit R.*

Agent. A newspaper office always leads to waste of time. Still it's just as well to keep on good terms with the press.

Enter CAPTAIN BLINKS.

Blinks. Where's the editor of this vile sheet?

Agent. You'll find the editor in that room.

Blinks. Ah, I'll find him in that room—and in that room I will force his scurrilous lies down his damned throat. I will wipe the floor with him.

Agent. Can't I sell you a copy of the revised New Testament—you seem to need something of the sort.

Blinks. D—n it, madam, all I need is blood, and that I will draw from the veins of the rascally editor. In there, you say.

[*Passes out R.*

[*Fight heard off R., broken furniture thrown in on stage, ink bottles, etc.*

Half of Blinks's coat—BLINKS tumbles in a total wreck.]

Agent. Well, did you see him?

Blinks. Do I look as though I had seen him?

[*Rushes off. Enter QUILL R., calmly smoking pipe.*]

Quill. If this thing goes on I shan't be able to write any verses for to-day's issue.

Enter GRATTAN.

Good gracious, another?

Grattan. Look a-here, young fellow, are you in charge of this shebang?

Quill. That's what I'm in charge of.

Grattan. Don't you know that I'm one of the fourth ward boys, and when you print things like this about the politics of that ward, you run the risk of a considerable whipping.

Quill. At your hands?

Grattan. Ay, at mine, and I'm a pretty bad man when I get started. I was in the ring once, and I've whipped more than seven like you, and thought no more of it than a training spell. Cully, I've killed men for less than this here.

Quill. And you feel like killing me?

Grattan. Ay, if you don't take it back!

Quill. Well, understand, once for all, nothing is ever taken back here, except a back seat, and I'm not the editor they keep for taking that. So as I've no more time to fool away this morning, I'll just settle your case right off. [*Deliberately strips—they spar—GRATTAN gets the worst, and is finally thrown out in a glass smash.*]

Quill. If there is one thing in this world I do know a little more about than another, it is editing a campaign paper.

[*Characters come back one at a time, freshly armed, but QUILL sends them through the window in succession.*]

Enter MAX.

Max. Gopy!

[*QUILL bounces him after the balance.—Book agent holds up picture of prize fighter.*]

Agent. The whole theory and practice of the manly art of self-defense, fifteen cents, or two copies for a quarter.

QUILL starts to bounce her. She fights him off with her umbrella. He seizes her bonnet, and in so doing, snatching off her wig, etc., leaving her bald, sinks in chair, fanning himself with bonnet. She screaming. Closed in.]

SCENE II.—*Garden, or woodland scene.*

Enter JESSIE and FLOY, in conversation.

Floy. Oh, I feel at all sixes and sevens, to-day.

Jessie. What is the matter, dear?

Floy. To think that he should turn out to be the son of a disreputable old sailor.

Jessie. You must remember, Floy, that Mr. Driverton, although so fond of drawing the long bow about his adventures, and so forth, never dropped a hint to lead us to imagine that he was particularly well connected, or anything of that sort.

Floy. But he was so well informed, so brilliant in conversation, and so very chivalrons in his ideas about—about certain things—that he seemed to me to be a prince at least.

Jessie. In a republic like ours, Floy, all nobility must be of the mind; and, heaven knows, it is a better patent of nobility than our mushroom aristocracy can show. What could be nobler, for instance, than that case Syl told us of, when Mr. Driverton, himself a very poor man, relieved the distress of that poor tenement-house family? What was he? He was sent there as a newspaper man to anatomize their misery for a public example, but he remained a true, good angel to relieve it.

Floy. It was very noble of him. But what a strange profession, which brings him into contact with such wretchedness.

Jessie. As I understand it, Floy, there is no walk in life too high or too low, too exalted in virtue or too debased in crime, to be the walk of the newspaper man who is seeking material to fill the broad sheet which we glance over so carelessly between two cups of coffee at the breakfast table. I think a more singular instance of our friend's journalistic vocation was his effecting the arrest of that murderer the other day. There was a case which had baffled the skill of the whole detective force, yet was brought to light by the unaided acumen of a simple newspaper reporter.

Floy. To my mind he did more to elevate his profession and reflect credit on himself when he rescued the child from that fire in Seventy-fourth Street, the other night. There was heroism; a fearless ignoring of risk; the brave act of a brave man, which no panegyric of mine or the public, freely as both have been lavished, can make it seem a whit brighter than it naturally is.

Jessie. It was indeed an act of splendid courage. I wonder why, prone as he is to tell extraordinary stories about himself and his adventures, he never touches on the really wonderful achievements he has accomplished under our own eye, as it were.

Floy. Because they are real, and redound with too much credit to himself. He has, in spite of his Gasconading, the modesty of true courage. The stories he tells are fantastic and amusing, and he scarcely means them to be believed. The acts he performs are real and sterling, and he is too true a gentleman to boast of them.

Jessie. He is a very fascinating man certainly, and I think an honest and good one. It must have required no small degree of moral courage to acknowledge a disreputable parent in the face of such an assemblage. Yet he never hesitated for a single moment.

Floy. That is true. He stepped out and did his duty nobly, and I am afraid I made it harder for him, but I was so surprised.

Jessie. If you have been deceived in his social status, you have deceived yourself; he had no hand in it, and is not to blame.

Floy. Oh, you need not defend him, *Jessie*, though I love you for doing it. I am afraid I only admire him the more for what he did last night.

Jessie. You are afraid; ah, *Floy*! You have not allowed yourself to become interested in this Bohemian?

Floy. I'm not sure that I could have helped it. What difference does it make, anyhow?

Jessie. What difference? When your uncle has set his heart on your marrying Sylvester!

Floy. And I've set my heart on your marrying him. My uncle means very well, but he shouldn't tamper with girls' hearts. They are a commodity about which he knows absolutely nothing.

Jessie. I shall never marry Sylvester, though I do love him very dearly.

Floy. And I shall never marry Quill Driverton.

Jessie. I should hope not.

Floy. But I think I love him very dearly, all the same. Unfortunately, he has a rooted antipathy to girls with money, so I have not much chance, I suppose. Have you seen uncle this morning?

Jessie. Yes; he is up to his eyes in his election.

Floy. How selfish I am—I quite forgot that they are voting to-day.

Jessie. Yes, this is the day big with the fate of Cæsar and of Rome. I think I had better go to Mr. Alford for a little. He may want me.

Floy. Do, dear. I feel so useless—I am good for nothing or nobody.

Jessie. Nonsense, child. You're the light of the household.

[*Exit JESSIE.*]

Floy. Light of the household! Well, I'm sorry for the household, if I am, that's all. I feel thoroughly miserable. Everything has gone wrong or is going wrong. I suppose Mr. Driverton will scarcely come back after the scene of last night; and even if he does, I don't see that it will do any good. And I'll just bet that every one has voted against uncle, and he won't be elected, and that'll make him mad, and the whole world's a howling wilderness, anyhow. There seems to be no substance or stability to anything. Everything seems hollow, and I feel just as I felt ten years ago, when I found out one day that my doll was stuffed with sawdust.

[*Exit FLOY.*]

SCENE III.—*Garden and Grounds of POTTER ALFORD'S handsome country seat. Set House, L., extending from 2d grooves obliquely up. Practicable balcony in front—steps to door. Large window, exposing view of hall entrance. Rustic benches R. and L., and in grounds.*

MARY ANN busy with flowers.

Mary Ann. I'd like to know what they think a girl's made of. I axed Mr. Quill that when he took Max away to his printing office, and he said, "Maid of all work," and it's meself thinks he's in the right of it. Faith, he ought to know, anyhow, for he can't be any great shakes himself, if that ould chap was his father, as he said.

Maybe it would have served him better to find the ould man a job of work round his newspaper office, in place of taking Max away, and leaving me to attend to everything. Well these flowers may do the best way they can, for I've no more time to be giving them. Och, my heart's broke entirely. [Exit into house.]

Enter QUILL and JOB R. U. E.

Quill. Now, you'll see Mr. Alford, father, and just express your regrets for what occurred yesterday, and we'll both say good-bye to him.

Job. Why should you say good-bye to him, Quill. Don't let me think that I've been the means of cutting you out of a snug anchorage.

Quill. Not a bit of it. My business is over. I was only engaged for the election, and the result of that will be known to-day, and then we'll be off, and have a good spell ashore together.

Job. No, my boy. I'm off again. I don't get on well ashore. I think—I believe I'll go on sailing till some fine day my watch on deck will be called, and I'll not be there. I'll be lying in my hammock, and not able to leave it—'cause, why—my mates will have stitched me up in it.

Quill. That'll be a long day off, please God, father.

Job. Oh, I'm old, Quill, and it makes little difference to me. When the last boatswain pipes aloft, I'll be ready to go; 'specially, as I see you good and hearty, independent of them all, and making your own living and an honest man in the world, and owing no man anything.

Quill. Except you, father. I owe you a debt of gratitude which nothing can obliterate.

Job. Little, very little you owe me, lad. I was away so much I couldn't look arter you right—you might have drifted into shoal waters, but you didn't. You turned out an A 1 chap, copper-fastened and taut and true, and I'm proud of you. Still, Quill, there's a something on my mind that I've had it on my tongue to tell you any time in the last ten years, and it's something you ought to hear, and hear at once.

Quill. A secret!

Job. Ay, lad, a queer secret—a terrible secret to me. I ain't your father, Quill!

Quill. Not my father!

Job. No. We've been sailing under false colors, my lad, and it's time they were hauled down.

Quill. Not my father! But I don't understand—

Job. It isn't to be expected that you should—not all at once. It's a long yarn, Quill, but I'll cut it as short as can be. Nigh unto twenty three years ago—I disremember the exact date—I was one of the crew of the *America*, a staunch ship as plied between New York and Liverpool. Well, on the voyage we had among our passengers a lady and her husband and their little baby. The lady

was as white as a green hand the first day out, and was so delicate-looking that I pitied her. The baby was a fine, bright-eyed little chap, and he kinder took to me, and, by degrees, I grew very fond of him, and used to watch for him coming on deck—but this is fair weather sailing, and I'll never get on with my yarn. We'd been out only a few days when a hurricane came up—I guess the worst I ever saw, and I've seen some before and since. For two days the ship labored in the heavy seas, part of the time lashin' like mad against the wreck of her own foremast. Naturally, she sprung a-leak. We worked at the pumps most of the third day, but it warnt no use. Then the captain gave the order—"lower away the boats!" Pretty soon they were filled with the frightened passengers—and loaded as they were, I didn't see how they were going to live an hour in the sea that was still running. I was just getting ready to look out for myself, when I seed the pale lady and the youngster in her arms leaning against the stump of the foremast. The gentleman had got separated from them in the rush of the frightened passengers, and there he was in the cutter, a dozen boat's length from the side, going on like mad, and trying to get back for his wife and baby. Of course the boat would a been stove into matches if they ever tried to bring her along-side, but all the same, he was trying to get back, and would a jumped overboard if they hadn't held him. "Save my wife! save my boy!" that was all he said, and the cry is ringing in my ears at this minute.

Quill. Poor fellow!

Job. "I'll save them," said I, "if saved they can be." With that, and without saying a word, I managed to get hold of a big bit of wreckage—part of the forehatch, I think, and I lashed them to it—mother and child—and then I heaved them overboard, and triced myself up as well as I could to the same, and so we left the ship. For two days we drifted about on the water without a monthful of food or drink, the sun beating down on our bare heads. The lady didn't never complain, though I could see how she was a suffering, and the next night she kissed the baby about a dozen times, and then closed her eyes, and she never opened them again till she met the angels. The little chap stood it wonderful though. I said a prayer over the lady, and then I took my knife and cut the rope that bound her to the wreck, and she sank into the sea.

Quill. Terrible!

Job. The next day we was picked up by an Australian bound packet ship. There were some women aboard the ship, and they took charge of the youngster, and I turned in with the crew as soon as I got my strength back, which did not take me long in them days. Well, it was two years afore we struck New York again, and I had the baby with me. He had learned to call me "dad" by that time. I tried, but could not find out anything about the gentleman who was lost in the America. I thought it was a moral certainty that he must have foundered in that crowded boat. So I thought

the best thing I could do was to rear the child that God had sent me as my own—and that's how you was brought up, Quill.

Quill. I ?

Job. Ay, you !

Quill. Inscrutable providence ! The same story. I am Potter Alford's son !

Job. Potter Alford was the man's name. You remember how it struck me kind o' familiar when I heard it. I'd been a trying to think of it for more than twenty years.

Quill. And, having this secret, you never told me. Never let me suspect, for over twenty years, that I was other than your son. Let me find my education in the gutter, and suffer want and privation. You may think it nothing, but I tell you, old man, it was a crime.

Job. Now don't be hard on me, Quill. I knowed as how I wasn't a doing the right thing by you, but I had growed to love you so, I couldn't bear the thought of letting you go. No, Quill, you don't know how the thought of you has been my solace in many a hard and many a lonely hour, or you couldn't blame me for keeping my secret, since it was the only way I could keep you.

Quill. Forgive me, father—for you are the only father I have ever known. I was unkind, ungrateful.

Job. It was natural, Quill, and I'm proud of you right through. It'll be hard to give you up, my boy.

Quill. I shall never cease to regard you as my father. But leave me for a few minutes, please. All this has come so suddenly upon me, that it confuses me a little.

Job. Ay, naturally. Think it out, Quill, think it out. I'll just take a cruise round these here grounds, and I'll be within hailing distance when you want me. [*Aside.*] I'll do it—it's my duty to the lad, and I'll do it.

[*Exit into house, L. 3 E.*]

Quill. Now master Quill, you must do about five minutes of the most solid thinking you ever did in your life. So, I'm the son of Potter Alford. The son of the owner of this magnificent house and grounds. I, who have rarely had a dollar for my wants, am now the heir to millions. By Jove, the Vox Populi ceases to be a dream—it takes shape and consistency. But there's Syl ! If I'm the long-lost son, what becomes of him ? He has been brought up as the heir. Nobody wants me. I've been dead these three-and-twenty years. I feel confoundedly like an interloper. After all, why should I wish to quit Bright Bohemia and take a new place in the world as a rich man's son ? Yet my newly-found father has his rights, too ; and I—I would dearly like to take my father's hand. But there is Syl—on the whole, I think I had better not interfere with existing arrangements. [*Goes up but stops and comes down suddenly.*] Floy ? I can't give her up. I will go to my father and say, "Embrace your son ; I do not want your wealth—give it to Syl, who has been brought up as your heir. Only give me Floy and enough to clear me of the suspicion of being a fortune-hunter—that and your blessing, father." Well, come what may, I shan't stand in Syl's light. I had everything fixed for him yesterday. I

talked Alford over, and he has promised to give his consent to Syl's marriage with Jessie, and I won't spoil everything now. I'll stroll about the grounds a bit and try to master my thoughts. Oh, my first love, my kind mother, Bright Bohemia, you have never been chary to me yet. You always had an idea to give me when I needed one, if nothing else. Teach me how to unwind this coil without spoiling the happiness of any of my friends.

[*Exit* QUILL.]

Enter JOB, *from house.*

Job. I've done it. I've told the old governor all. I somehow felt that boy, Quill, would be just lubber enough to go away and never say anything about it. It would be just like him, and I don't allow to have neither on us sailing under false colors any longer.

Enter QUILL.

Well, Quill, my lad. I've told the old gentleman all.

Quill. [*Aside.*] Too late! How did he take it?

Job. Like a ship takes a white squall. It nearly capsized him for a moment; but he weathered it. All he wants now is to see you. He's having a big, joyful cry all to himself, and he wants you to share it.

Quill. Poor old man! [*Sees FLOY coming.*] Oh, here comes that ray of blessed sunlight. I must be Quill Driverton just for ten minutes more to hear her say, "I love you, Quill." [*To JOB.*] Tell the old gentleman I'll be with him directly—the minute I can collect myself and pull my thoughts together. Go on.

Job. All right, lad, but don't be long. [*Exit JOB into house.*]

FLOY *enters.*

Quill. Well, Miss Floy, been communing with nature, I suppose?

Floy. Well, I was taking a solitary stroll through the grounds, and I met a marching club. That fat Dutchman is escorting the procession with his wonderful band. He says he's had enough of the newspaper business.

Quill. Bohemians are born, not made. It's as impossible to force a stranger into the guild as it is to lure a native out of it.

Floy. Would nothing lure you from Bohemia, Mr. Driverton?

Quill. Only one thing in the world. And you would not wish to lure me away from Bohemia, would you?

Floy. Not for the world; but you speak as if I might be the one power that could tempt you out of the mists and magic of the county of Prague.

Quill. You are. Yesterday, had you said so much to me, I should have answered you with an equivocation; but to-day I can dare to speak. Floy, you know little of me, and that little is not altogether favorable. I do not know where I am finding the courage to speak to you; it may be sheer desperation, or it may be the native hardi-

hood which is so large a part of the Bohemian's stock in trade; but I love you, Floy; I must say it—I love you. Perhaps you had guessed as much.

Floy. I had hoped as much.

Quill. Oh, now I can speak. Yesterday you seemed as far removed from me, as unattainable, as yonder sun that rules in the heavens. To-day you seem nearer; to-day I feel free to woo you—to win you if I can. Yesterday I was a nameless Bohemian, whose addresses would have insulted Miss Wolverton—

Floy. [*Softly.*] Oh, no.

Quill. But to-day I can offer my Floy an honest love—without sycophancy to her, without degradation to myself.

Floy. And she accepts it, Quill, very gratefully, very happily, even as she would have accepted it yesterday. Your words seem to hint at some change in your fortune, but Quill Driverton, the Bohemian, has won my heart, and it is to Quill Driverton, the Bohemian, I shall give it.

Quill. God bless you, my love!

[*They embrace.*]

Enter ALFORD and JOB from house.

Alford. My son!—my boy! [*Runs to QUILL, and embraces him.*]

Enter SYL and JESSIE.

Floy. Mr. Alford's son!

Job. Even so, miss. He warn't drowned—not he.

Floy. Mr. Alford's son and my cousin!

Quill. Ay, and accepted husband. Eh, father?

Alford. Better and better. I am glad to hear it.

Jessie. And Mr. Driverton is—

Alford. My son; whom I thought lost in the wreck of the *America*. This old sailor is the man who so nobly endeavored to save my wife and child, and when my sainted Mabel succumbed to the effects of the shock and exposure, took care of my boy and reared him to be an upright, honorable, useful man—a boy of whom any father might feel proud.

Syl. My dear fellow, I congratulate you. You deserve all your luck.

Quill. I am obliged to you all. I accept Mr. Alford's, my father's, name and love, because they rightfully belong to me; but I cannot step into Syl's shoes. If I am your son, sir—he is my brother.

Alford. So he is. [*To SYL.*] Don't think, my dear boy, that all the love learned in twenty years is to be forgotten in a moment. I have sufficient wealth for you both—even if Quill chooses to waste some of it in starting his "*Vox Populi*."

Quill. It will not waste anything. My dear sir, I do not think you appreciate the position that paper will take in the world of journalism. It will go to every household in the land, for there

will be a department for every taste. It will, as its name implies, give voice to the popular demands. I will deal fearlessly and brilliantly with politics. It will contain the news of the world; bright criticisms on the drama and current literature; and editorials—by Jove, sir, it will contain certain editorials calculated to make folks stand from under.

Floy. And poetry—won't it contain any poetry?

Quill. Oh, yes; there will always be a favorite corner in my paper, in my heart, and I trust, in the hearts of my friends, for the light and unconsidered trifles that are cast up on the barren, unromantic shores of our work-a-day world by the waves of

BRIGHT BOHEMIA.

[*Band heard—Club files in, bearing transparencies and cheering "ALFORD forever!" "Hurrah for our new Congressman!" ALFORD goes to balcony to receive them, with DURHAM and others. QUILL and FLOY on rustic seat, R., JESSIE and SYL, L. Stage backed with other characters. Band plays. ALFORD tries to speak as*

CURTAIN.





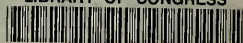




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